# IMPRIMATUR,

July 13. 1687.

*Hen. Maurice*, Reverendiſſimo in Chriſto. P. D. *Wilhelmo.* Archiep. *Cant.* à Sacris.

# IMPRIMATUR,

July 13. 1687.

*Hen. Maurice*, Reverendiſſimo in Chriſto. P. D. *Wilhelmo.* Archiep. *Cant.* à Sacris.

A Fair and Methodical Discussion
OF THE
First and Great CONTROVERSY,
BETWEEN THE
# CHURCH of ENGLAND,
AND
# Church of Rome,
Concerning the
# INFALLIBLE GUIDE.

## In Three Discourses.

Whereof the FIRST is Introductory, and states the Points, which are Preliminary to this, and all the other Controversies between the two Churches.

The SECOND considers at large the Pretence of Modern Infallibility, and shews it to be Groundless.

The THIRD, by the help of the Former, briefly examines the *Pretended Rational Account of the* Roman Catholicks, *concerning the Ecclesiastical Guide in Controversies of Religion*; and detects its Artifice.

*LONDON*,
Printed for R. Chiswell at the *Rose* and *Crown* in St. *Paul's* Church-yard, and R. Bentley in *Russel-Street* in *Covent-Garden*. MDCLXXXIX.

# An ADVERTISEMENT TO THE READER.

*THE two former Diſcourſes were begun, and almoſt finiſhed nigh four years ago, on a deſign of bringing the whole* Romiſh *Controverſie into a natural Method, for the Author's private ſatisfaction. Neither was he brought to think, that there was any need of them for the Publick, during the late Religious Debate; our Cauſe having been ſo warmly, and ſo ſucceſsfully undertaken by abler hands, againſt the Imprudent Aggreſſors. But becauſe there was in theſe Papers ſome reſpect had to the Arguments of the Famous* Romiſh Guide, *and that whole Book might very eaſily and very briefly be refuted thence; it was thought fit, that they*

*ſhould however appear abroad for that Service: and accordingly, as much as is now Printed, was Licenſed the laſt Summer was Twelvemonth. But then, it being ſtopt by ſome Accidents from coming out to its Date, and our Adverſaries ſeeming to have given up the Diſpute, this Deſign was quite given over too. Nor had it been reſum'd, had not the Author been told, that now the* Romaniſts *have had ſo little to ſay of their own, they would the rather call for the formality of an Anſwer to their Old Champion; and had he not beſides conſider'd, that the Pains here taken, of examining at large ſuch Trifling Arguments, might be ſo far uſeful to the World, as to ſave ſome one elſe the ungrateful Labour, who might beſtow his time better for the Publick Good.*

---

## ERRATA.

PAge 29. in the Margin over againſt *line* 33. put *Iren.* l. 3. c. 4. p. 42. after the 14 *l.* put *Baſil. de Sp. Sanct.* cap. 27. p. 66. *l.* 9. for *Impenitent* read *Impertinent. l.* 14. read *to ſtick to the Concluſion.* p. 79. *l.* 32. for 200 read 100. p. 96. *l.* 4. for *a* read *no.* p. 100. place over againſt the 11*th. l.* §. VIII. and after in the running Contents of the Chap. for 7. read 8. p. 116. over againſt the 14 *l.* place §. III.

DISCOURSE

# DISCOURSE I.

## Concerning the

## PRELIMINARY POINTS, &c.

### The CONTENTS.


Chap.

*THat the Pretence of any Modern Church to Infallibility, is to be prov'd by that Church, from the word of God, Written, or Unwritten.* I.

*That there is no Diſpute between our Church and the Church of* Rome, *concerning the Authority of thoſe Scriptures, that are to decide this, or any other Point in difference; except that only of Prayer for the Dead.* II.


*Tradition*

## The CONTENTS.


| | Chap. |
|---|---|
| *Tradition, or the Unwritten Word Considered.* | |
| *The Nature of Tradition.* | III. |
| *The Uncertainty of Oral Tradition, particularly in Temporal Affairs.* | IV. |
| *That there is not much more reason for its Certainty in Eccleſiaſtical, than in Temporal Matters.* | V. |
| *The Caſe of Tradition, as to Eccleſiaſtical Matters, particularly conſidered.* | VI. |
| *Some Articles to be obſerved, concerning Traditional Authorities.* | VII. |


---

DISCOURSE

Chap. 1. *Proofs for Infallibility must be brought, and whence.*

# DISCOURSE I.

## *Concerning the Preliminary Points, &c.*

### CHAP. I.

*That the Pretence of any Modern Church to Infallibility, is to be prov'd by that Church, and that the Proofs must be brought from the Word of God Written or Unwritten.*

AS Religion is a common Concern, and of the greateſt Moment; ſo it is to be expected, that every Man ſhould apply himſelf to the Conſideration of it, with great Diligence and Zeal; and ſhould take care, if Diſputes ariſe concerning any material difference in it, that he be not of the wrong ſide; his Future Eternal Happineſs depending ſo much on the right choice.

Now the differences between the Church of *Rome*, and ours of *England* being very great; The one pretending God to be well pleaſed with the Service, at which the other ſays he is extremely Offended; The one requiring ſuch things to be profeſs'd as neceſſary Truths, which the other avows to be falſities: Every Ingenuous Man, who is a Lover of Truth, and deſirous to ſerve his God acceptably, is obliged to inform and ſatisfie himſelf concerning the Matters in Debate.

And if one of theſe Churches ſhall poſitively command us not to queſtion her Determinations, and tell us that ſhe ought to be believed without further Examination; that ſhe

Chap. 1. *Proofs for Infallibility must be brought, and whence.*

is the Infallible Judge, and if any Difference arises, it must be determin'd by her Authority: If this shall be the pretence of one of the Parties, to be such a Judge in her own Cause, and the other denies the Jurisdiction; it is plain that this now is another new question between them, to be decided some indifferent way.

The Church of *Rome*, if she challenges this Privilege of Infallibility, must however be content to wave it for a time, and to submit it to a Tryal. And not only so, but she is to remember too, that the Burden of the Proof lies altogether on her side; all common Humane Presumption being so violent against her in this case. For we suppose she understands the nature of Christian Faith better, than to impute any want of that, to such a Reasonable Inquiry. We should indeed, we confess, be guilty of the want of it, should we not believe the Infallible Authority of our Saviour, and his Apostles; and should we not be ready to assent to what ever they shall have deliver'd; and this our Faith, the Roman Church is now desir'd to try, and to see whether we will not immediately yield to any good Argument they shall be able to bring us thence: But for us, without such Apostolical Direction and Warrant, to believe any Modern number of Men Infallible: This, we conceive, would not be an Act of Divine Faith, but a fond unaccountable Credulity, a Credulity below Human, that would not only by its easie Folly disgrace the rest of our Belief, but may in the consequence be carried to destroy it.

Now that Church when it claims such an Infallible Judicature, must claim it by vertue of some Power deriv'd from Christ, and this Commission must some way or other be produc'd and vouch'd.

This Commission then to be produced, must either be under the Hands of one of the Evangelists or Apostles, and so it would be undeniable; or some Authority by Word of Mouth, signify'd from Christ or his Apostles, of which we may have some certain notice.

This is the way that Question is to be debated; and it is plain that every Christian is to judge of it seriously and carefully; that he may either immediately submit to this Authority, if it

it be juſt; or if it be not, that he may not be led by a voluntary Subjection to Men, to do ſuch things as may diſpleaſe his God.

Chap. 1. *Proofs for Infallibility muſt be brought, and whence.*

It appears then, that in this Cauſe we are to be determin'd by Scripture and Tradition: And if the Roman Church is able to make good its Authority thence, we are to look no further, but ſubmit in the other points: But if ſhe ſhall be judged to have no ſuch Power, then thoſe other points muſt be try'd the ſame way, by Scripture and Tradition alſo.

Seeing then that Scripture and Tradition are the only Rules, by which we are to judge of the Truth of that Pretence, and conſequently of all other Diſputes that depend between the two Parties: We ought firſt to take Knowledge of theſe two great Principles, fixing and aſcertaining them, before we undertake to proceed further.

---

## CHAP. II.

*That concerning the Authority of thoſe Scriptures which are to decide this Point of Infallibility, (or any other, ſaving that of Prayers for the Dead,) there is no Diſpute between us and the Church of* Rome.

AS to Scripture, the two Churches do not differ much. The Books of the New Teſtament are the ſame with them and us; received equally on both ſides, as Divinely Inſpired, and of unqueſtionable Truth. The Books of the Old Teſtament are the ſame too, excepting the Apochryphal Books, which they eſteem as Canonical as the reſt, we with great Reaſon and Authority denying them that Sacred Character. However for the preſent let them be admitted and ſtand by, till the time comes to remove them: For they have nothing to ſay, I think, between thoſe of *Rome* and us, but in the Caſe of Prayer for the Dead.

Chap. 2. *The Scriptures agreed on.*

Both sides therefore are obliged to assent immediately to any thing affirmed in those Books, commonly received by us, of the Old and New Testament.

But here the Church of *Rome* is not to fancy, that when we receive the Holy Scriptures for Divine, we receive them by vertue of her Infallible Authority.

We receive them from her hands, as we might have received them from the *Greek*, or more *Eastern* Churches. We receive them from her, not as a Judge over us, but as a Library Keeper, and a Witness: a Witness too, in such a Case, where her Testimony is corroborated by the Concurrence of others.

For, under favour, where her vulgar Latine disagrees from the *Greek* Copies, we may take the liberty to prefer the Original: and if her *Greek* Copies had differ'd materially from those in the hands of the *Greeks*, or from the Copies in other Languages; we should not have defer'd so much to her, as to have trusted her single Authority without better enquiry. But God be thanked, we find by collating the several Copies of several places and Languages, and the many Citations scattered in infinite Books, that we cannot complain of any falsification in this point.

But Honesty in one instance, where they could not well do otherwise, is not therefore necessarily to be presum'd in all. And besides, if we should allow that Church to be so honest, as not willingly to deceive; yet it would be a great strain to say, that therefore she can't be deceived, and is Infallible.

We receive then the same Scriptures that they, and submit our Differences to that Authority; and this we do, without being foreclosed, or obliged to stand to the Judgment of that Church in other things, and own her Infallibility.

CHAP.

Chap. 3. *The Nature of Tradition.*

## CHAP. III.

### *The Nature of Tradition.*

NOW beſides thoſe Truths or Precepts deliver'd down by the Evangeliſts or Apoſtles in Writing, there may be ſuppoſed many others ſpoken by them, which were of equal Authority with the Written, and obliged the Hearers as much; and which would too equally oblige us, had we any certain information concerning them.

Such Sayings not put in Writing by the inſpired Perſons themſelves, but taken from their Mouths, and deliver'd down by others, are call'd in Eccleſiaſtical Language Traditions; and as long as they are tranſmitted down by the Mouth, and not yet reduc'd into Writing, they are called Oral.

Theſe Traditions of either kind, Written or Oral, how many there are we would be glad to know: a great Body of them is pretended, ſome already authentically declared by Councils, or Popes; others mention'd by ſeveral Men, in ſeveral places, and ſtanding for the next promotion; the reſt reſerved in Petto, to be produced on Occaſion Eternally.

Now becauſe we may ſuſpect that we ſhall be preſſed mainly by Evidences of this nature, it will be beſt beforehand to enquire into their Circumſtances and Character, and ſee how credible Deponents they may prove.

Theſe Sayings therefore pretended to be ſpoke by Chriſt or his Apoſtles, are given us either word for word, or the ſence and ſubſtance only; and are for ſome time at leaſt ſuppoſed to be deliver'd down by ſtrength of Memory.

Now as to what is tranſmitted Orally, and to be preſerved by ſucceſſive Memories, we may conſider; that to take and make the report of a Diſcourſe word for word, theſe things are neceſſary: Attention to what was ſpoke, a due Perception of it, and a Memory that ſhall retain it. To give an exact Summary of a Diſcourſe, there is beſides neceſſary,

Chap. 1. *The Nature of Tradition.*

a Judgment both comprehensive enough to take in the whole meaning, and so upright and unprejudicate as to give it no turn or bias; and besides that the Sense, if spoke in new words, should be truly expressed. And therefore further there must be consider'd another requisite of Care and Diligence, that must be all along supposed in each part, either to attend, conceive, and retain, or else fully and uprightly to consider and to express properly: Not to mention that Fidelity that is required, as in the custody or transmission of a Writing, so in the delivery of an Oral Narrative.

There lies this Difficulty on all Oral Records: and it is plain there is very little or none of it on the Written. To keep the Written is, in the general, only to let it lye where it does; and to deliver it to another, is no more than to deliver so much Paper or Parchment into his hands; a matter of no wonderful Skill or Capacity, to be discharged by any who is not an Ideot. So too, to Transcribe the Original into other Copies, be it never so long or Intricate, requires no more Learned Ability of a Man, than to Read and Write; and no greater strength of Memory, than to bear in his head three or four Words, the while he writes them down: For this performance, one wou'd think there is no such need of great Clerkship; and it is easie to conceive how it may be done.

Those therefore in our Age, who cou'd disparage the Invention of Letters so much, as to prefer Oral Tradition before the Written, for the more easy and certain conveyance of the two; must have had some great Pique at some certain Writing: and must too have thought the Truth of their Cause very unevident, when such an unreasonable Propoition was to be brought for its proof, and premis'd as the nore undeniable of the two.

I insist not therefore on the ridiculous Comparison, whether it be easier to copy a Book, or to get it by heart; to carry it in ones hand, or let it lye where it does, than to charge it upon ones Memory, and bear it in ones Head: which is the surer way of Record, to desire an Officer to remember a Deed, or to Exemplifie it: and whether it be safer

safer to send a Message by Word of Mouth, from Stage to Stage, or by Letter. It is a hard case to be put seriously on such Determinations, not worthy certainly of an Infallible Judge. But I think the Readers patience, as well as my own, will have exercise enough, while it stoops to the following considerations: Where we proceed to enquire, what Credibility Oral Tradition can challenge after some tract of time; examining its Authority in Temporal Matters FIRST, and THEN in Spiritual.



## CHAP. IV.

### *Concerning the Uncertainty of Oral Tradition in Temporal Affairs.*

ORal Tradition, after it has gone but a little way, finds small Credit in Affairs of the World; it is call'd Hearsay, or Fame; and goes for uncertain at least, if not reputed a Lyar. A Story told at the third or fourth hand, is commonly so changed in its circumstances, that in common Conversation, tho' it passes for Discourse, it is never rely'd on without nearer Enquiry; nay, will hardly be repeated in the next Company, without this Addition; that he heard it not himself, and was only told so at such a distance. For the Person that gave me the Relation of a Discourse or an Action, may be believed by me, that he heard it so punctually from another, whom I know; and that other I may verily believe, upon his Affirmation, had it as he reports from a third Author; if too, I know that third Man for Honest and Exact, I may believe verily that, if he affirmed it, he gave a true recital of what he received from a fourth, *&c.* And yet, notwithstanding I have such a particular Confidence in each of these Men, that I would believe the Relation from each of them apart at the first hand; I should not however give the same entire credit to it, when it comes derived so far. For tho' I have Opinion enough of the Sincerity and Capacity of each; yet if the Subject of their

Chap. 4. *The Uncertainty of Oral Tradition in Temporal Affairs.*

their Report was any thing long or nice, and so liable to a Mistake; and I therefore not absolutely sure, but that some one of them might have mistaken: That Defective incomplete certainty diminishes in a continual progression; and will at a proportionable distance bring me to a suspense; as afterwards, if carried further, it will begin to increase in me a contrary inclination, rather to believe the conveyance Erroneous, than True.

It is known that Human Understanding in respect to belief, is consider'd as a Ballance, whose Scales are of a Determinate Capacity, and will turn upon some certain Weight. As then, if in one Scale there be a considerable Weight, and in the other an Equal, there is an equiponderance; if that other Weight abates but little, there is some doubtful Equiponderance still: But if it abates notably, the first Scale begins to fix, growing still the more and more unmoveable, according as the Weight in the second diminishes; which we may suppose to decrease so long, till it is either none, or of no moment at all: In like manner in our Understanding, if the Evidence on one side be considerable, but that on the other as great, our Belief is in a suspence; If that on the other be but a little less, we are still in a suspence, tho' wavering and inclining to the opposite; Afterward when the difference of Weight is momentous, we begin to settle and rest on the preponderating side; but grow more and more fixed, as the probability for the other does decrease; which at last may be either none, or such as the Ballance shall not feel.

Now, when to this observation we add further, that the Understanding of Man is such a Ballance, as leaves out often what it is to weigh; and, to what it weighs, does not always give the due weight: we shall then easily perceive that Human Belief has its several Degrees; and tho' it rests on one side and is fixed, yet all the while there may be Probabilities too for the contrary, in the other Scale. Tho' therefore the Opinion we have of the Capacity, Care, and Integrity of a Man, may determin us to believe his Report; yet our belief is not always so determin'd, that there is nothing of Verisimilitude on the other

ther ſide. If he avers a Fact in which he could not well be deceived, we immediately and firmly believe it; as that he received this Writing from another: But if he affirms the truth of a Verbal Recital, that is long and intricate, and after ſome length of Time; he cannot expect to be believed, but in a leſs degree. For no Honeſt Prudent Man wou'd in this caſe depoſe to the Words of a Diſcourſe, without this Caution, *to the beſt of his Memory*; nor to the ſubſtance of it, without that other, *to the beſt of his Underſtanding*. But laſtly, if ſuch a Relation be not poſitively averr'd, but told without ſuch formality of Aſſurance; or averr'd but by a ſtranger, or one in whoſe Integrity we do not abſolutely confide; the degree of our Belief will be yet leſs: The odds for the Truth of the firſt, may be a thouſand, or if you pleaſe a Million to one; for the truth of the ſecond, it may not be that of Ten; and for the third, not above that of Two. Now this laſt meaſure of Belief generally ſerves in all ordinary Converſation; and ſomething much leſs than the firſt, even in Cauſes of Life and Death.

Chap. 4. *The Uncertainty of Oral Tradition in Temporal Affairs.*

To return then to our firſt Caſe; let us ſuppoſe the four ſucceſſive Relators to aver, what they ſucceſſively ſaid; and let it be ſuppoſed, that I would have given each of them in my Belief, ſuch an odds or preponderance as 5. to 1. which in many caſes is a very liberal Allowance: It is demonſtrable then, that altho' I give a very great Credit to ſuch a Relation at the firſt hand, at the 4*th* I muſt not give any; as it is alſo certain by the ſame undeniable computation, that a Report which at the firſt hand has the Odds in certainty, of 10 to 1, at the 7*th* hand would have none: And alike certain, that if at the firſt hand there be two to one for the probability of a Narrative, the advantage at the ſecond will lye on the other ſide.

Thoſe that are vers'd in Calculation, know it to be ſuppos'd here: That the Continuity of an *Oral Tradition*, or the progreſs of a Report, is as a Chain compos'd of ſeveral Probabilities or Contingencies: That the probability of the whole diminiſhes ſtill, as the particular Contingencies multiply; in the ſame kind of proportion in which the

Chap. 4. *The Uncertainty of Oral Tradition in Temporal Affairs.*

preſent value of Money leſſens, upon rebate of Compound Intereſt, by the diſtances of the future Payment: And laſtly, that as the likelyhood for preſerving the continuity of Truth abates, ſo the likelyhood for Interruption and Miſtake ariſes.

The Computation we have made from theſe Suppoſitions is exact, the Reader may be aſſur'd; and gives the preciſe reaſon of that uncertainty, of which the World is ſo very ſenſible in groſs, as to give but ſmall Credit to Hear-ſay Relations. In any matter of Conſequence, they are ſtill rejected, and any Jury marks them with an *Ignoramus*. I take leave to add, tho' in another Caſe, that the ſame way of Speculation will diſcover how juſtly a great difference in value is ſtill made between the Teſtimony of a ſingle Witneſs, and that of two concurring: For the certainty is not only doubled by the addition of their Perſons, but multiplyed by the proportion of their credibility, in ſuch a manner, that if the Credit of each Witneſs ſingly was as ten to one, there would be above ſix ſcore to one for the truth of what they depos'd jointly.

But as to the Subject in hand, and that I may diſpatch theſe Niceties all at once, the Reader may conſider further; that in the numbering of the years of any ſucceſſive Generations of Men, thirty years are commonly aſſign'd to the duration of each, taking them one with another. This is the Calculation of the Ancients, from ſome old Succeſſions. However we are content to allow about forty, a Number that may be tryed in the two laſt fourteen Generations of our Saviour. But of that ſomething muſt be neceſſarily abated in our purpoſe; for a Child of a day, tho' he begin then to live, and continue a courſe of years, yet cannot take up a Tradition, and bear his part in that till he is of riper Age: So that we in our caſe are very reaſonable, when we follow the Vulgar Reckoning, and let a 100 years go for three Generations.

This number of years beyond which no ſingle Witneſs can be ſuppos'd to reach, (for he muſt be nigh a hundred and twenty years old, and then of good memory;) and for which three ſucceſſive ones muſt, in ordinary computati-

on, be allowed; is therefore deservedly by some *Civilians*, made the utmost limit of Humane information; and what is beyond it, is all in the dark, and out of the memory of Man. But if we shall pass further, and suppose our selves at the distance of three or 400 years, what was said then might have been thrice successively forgotten; and must be presumed to be buried in a multiplied Oblivion: It must have pass'd thro' ten or twelve several hands at least; been preserved by each of them thirty or forty years together; and were the odds upon each of them that of ten to one, that they would be so diligent and of so happy Memories, as to transmit each in his own time, (whereas 'tis by no means even,) yet that so much was not performed by the whole twelve, the odds on the contrary side would be as of two to one.

Chap 4. *The Uncertainty of Oral Tradition in Temporal Affairs.*

Let us then suppose that an Act of Parliament, of any length and niceness, were to pass from *Constable* to *Constable*, through twelve Parishes, by way of Oral Tradition, to be delivered over faithfully, and if you please on pain of death: How oft must it be repeated, and how much conn'd, or how well study'd and examin'd by each, to bring it either Verbatim, or in exact Abstract, to its journeys end? How fit do we think it wou'd be, at the ordinary rate of Humane Capacity, to be proclaim'd for Law in the last Town, and to be the ground there of a Judicial Decision? Nay, suppose the Officers successively to be very intelligent Men, and of more than common Memories; as the Performance wou'd be difficult to take up such a Charge, and carry it immediately cross the Parish; so much more, if each Man should be obliged, without help of Writing, to keep it for twenty, thirty, or forty years, and then at last to discharge himself on his Neighbour: It is too much to think that his Memory in that time shall not faulter; but where would the Tradition be if he himself should dye? But further yet, let us imagine all the Parish to come in and help; it is plain, that without the assistance of writing, they would rather help to confound and distract, than to ascertain; and wou'd easier agree to give a wrong Report, than know how to set it right; the

Chap. 4. *The Uncertainty of Oral Tradition in Temporal Affairs.*

burthen of the Truſt muſt at laſt reſt upon ſome one, or very few; whoſe Memories are as frail as their Lives; either of which failing before the day, the Tradition is loſt.

But all this is an extraordinary ſuppoſition. What then, if the diſtance of time continuing the ſame, the Succeſſive reporters are not preſum'd to be any ſuch Choice Men, but of the ordinary Size? what if they acted under no great apprehenſion of danger from the miſcarriage? what too if they were not deny'd the help of Writing, but were all along ſo little careful as not to think of uſing it? what great ſtreſs do we judge is to be laid at laſt upon this report (if any ſuch come,) ſo accidentally preſerved by the ſucceſſive Memories, and ſo contingently tranſmitted?

We perceive from what is ſaid, that it is no very feaſible project to deviſe an *Utopian* Succeſſion of Men, either by ſingle Perſons, or in Society; (propoſe what choice Regulation, Rewards, or Puniſhments you pleaſe;) that ſhall convey Orally any Record of ordinary length, through three or four hundred years, with ſuch a proportion of certainty as ſhall weigh with an underſtanding Man; there muſt be in that tract of time ſo much chance for failure and miſtake, that the Report at laſt, tho' not impoſſible to be true, yet ſhall be too unlikely ever to be admitted. If therefore we make no ſuch fiction, and remove all fanciful ſuppoſitions, if taking things and Men as they uſually are, we let this memorial Conveyance paſs in common courſe; we may eaſily conceive what will happen to it, and to what a miſerble degree of incertitude it muſt ſink; it muſt long before its period run out all its credit, and at laſt not retain ſo much probability as may poiſe with the duſt of the Balance.

For if ſayings are to be tranſmitted verbatim, Oral report, like an Eccho, may poſſibly keep ſomething of them up for a while; and the Repetitions, by Chance or Art, may be larger, or more: but by degrees they will faulter, diminiſh, and grow fainter, and at laſt expire. There is this difference, that the Vocal Tradition of an Eccho, tho' defective, is always true; and delivers faithfully every Syllable it returns: whereas our Oral Tradition is ſubject to the infirmity of falcifying, as well as forgetting; and does

not

not only let fall, but alters and confounds: so that its Voice how-ever loud it may continue, grows insignificant and uncertain; its Credit at least, like the sound of the Eccho, becoming fainter and weaker upon each repetition, and dying at some distance in the air.

Chap. 4. *The Uncertainty of Oral Tradition in Temporal Affairs.*

This is the fortune of Sayings that pass through the memory only: but where they are to pass through the understanding too, and are to come out in Abstract new moulded, and worded, they are in greater danger of being misconceiv'd or misrepresented; of receiving some new turn, according as the Bent of the Person, or Age is inclin'd. Some tincture of the Vessel in which they have been kept and digested, will pass along. If therefore they have went thro' many Persons, or much time, they must be presum'd to be much alter'd; even such Rules and Maxims as are intended to regulate Mens thoughts and manners, accommodating themselves so, and complying in such measure with the Minds that convey them, that at some distance they receive the change they ought to have produced.

Neither is the Case in this matter different between single Persons, and a Company of Men. For as single Men alter their Opinion of things often with their Age, and sometimes in their thoughts and humours become as it were other Men: so in Bodies or Societies, the same Mutations happen, and in an Age or two there are commonly new Maxims of thinking, and Modes of living, as certainly as there is a new Generation. A Society as it insensibly changes its Persons, so changes its Opinions insensibly too: there cannot be assign'd a time, when the Corporation begins to be a new sett of Men, so neither, when the new Opinions come in; but both come in by degrees: and as it is sure by the Law of Nature, that a hundred year will make a total change in the Persons, so a hundred or two hundred more may make a change in their Judgments. A Change of Judgment being easier than that of the Persons, because it may be made in the self same Persons: and then, when it is once pass'd, there is no more Memory of an old Opinion forsaken, than of an old Collegiate departed.

Now

Chap. 4. *The Uncertainty of Oral Tradition in Temporal Affairs.*

Now when Men alter by degrees, and all of them together: it may easily happen, that they themselves shall not perceive the variation. For they cannot discern it but by something without them, and which at the same time stands still. And if too they look on that direction, their Imagination may then be deceived; as those are who Sail by the Shore, and are apt to impute their own change of place to the fix'd Land. Upon which Account, two Societies may no more agree, which of them has varied; than Astronomers can resolve us, which it is that moves, the Earth and all its Company, or the Sun.

But of this, Language is a sufficient Instance: which in time changes imperceptibly, Men altering their Words and Phrases, and Pronunciation unawares; forgetting by degrees the old, as they take up new. And this happens, without any violent Intrusion of a Foreign Speech; but only from freedom of fancy, and voluntary acceptation: Some Men refining, or affecting, and others imitating, as the Humour and Mode may be. And this at last prevails so indiscernably, that those of the City when they go into the distant Countries, think they are come unto a People of another Language, who yet it may be speak the truer English. Which indeed is the truer; the Eastern, the Northern, and Western Man may differ: and the Dispute without writing could never be decided, except one of our Great-Grandfathers should arise and inform us. But Books will easily end the Controversie, and Old *Chaucer* produced, will tell us the variation that has pass'd in less than 300 years.

Now as Oral Tradition would not tell us a Discourse of 400 years old in the same Language in which it was spoke; so neither is it likely to give it us in the same Sense. Neither, if the present Age shall agree in the same Report, is it a greater argument of its antiquity, than it is of the antiquity of our present Phrase, that we all now speak it. Languages alter either by force, the old being driven out totally, as the *British* by the *Saxon*; or in part only, as the *Saxon* after by the *Norman*, from the mixture of which our *English* sprang: or else they voluntarily change by importation, as from our former *French* Wars, or later Travels;

by

by imitation, as in Habit so in Phrase, of *Italy* or *France*; by the Influence of those Nations on our Courts, and their influence then on the People; by new business, or new humour. Customs too and Manners, both in Civil and Religious Matters, alter in like manner; either by command and force, or by the gentler power of Example, and Contagion of practice. Now as without Books, we might have thought our Language the same it was spoke in *Julius Cæsar*'s time, and should not have been sensible of the changes since past; so neither should we have known any thing of the Government and Laws; but imagin'd this Form we now live under had been from the beginning, and that the City (for example) had a Mayor and Court of Aldermen by Charter from the *Romans*. For if Laws, tho' written, are often in a little time antiquated by desuetude, and abrogated by contrary custom, so that the Statute-Book it self secures them not the notice of the present Age; much more therefore may what was never Written be laid aside in a while, and at last utterly and irrecoverably be forgotten.

Chap. 4. *The Uncertainty of Oral Tradition in Temporal Affairs.*

But there is no more need of such reasoning speculation, than of that formal supposition, and scrupulous calculation we made before. For who is there that does not in fact see, what blind Stories are told of former times by those People that are without the use of Letters? what a darkness there dwells upon time, at a little distance; and still as the World goes forward, how fast night comes on behind; the Ages past, growing as obscure and unknown as those that are to come. So true it is, what was said by the *Egyptian* to *Solon*, (a Saying as good as any other of those Wise Men) *That the* Græcians *without the use of Writing were always Children; being still as of yesterday, without any knowledge of the World, and experience of former years.*

For this purpose, we of this Nation need but look upwards towards *Edward* the Third's Reigns, (I might have said *Henry* the Fifth, or even the Eighth,) and then reflect how much we know of that Victorious busie time, more than what Writing has informed us. What Action of War or Peace, what Passage or Saying is now pretended to be told,

Chap. 4. *The Uncertainty of Oral Tradition in Temporal Affairs.*

other than what we read? Let all the Old Men and Old Women be conſulted, and ſee what Traditional Memoirs they can furniſh for a Supplement to our Hiſtories and Records. If there be a tittle of Law or Story to be learnt that way, then we may begin to think, that the Statutes of that Reign might have been tranſmitted by Tradition, and the year Books by Oral Reports. But who does not ſee, that if Paper and Parchment were out of the way, there would be no footſtep nor Memorial of thoſe times; not a much better account of *Edward* the Third, than we have now of a Tenth *Edward*? The World muſt then begin with us, ſhort of that Age; and all before be but as the Chaos, darkneſs covering its face. All that we could then do, muſt be to judge the former days by our own; to imagine the ſame Proceedings, the ſame Rules of Government, and Courts of Juſtice, the ſame Cuſtoms and Interpretations of Laws by which we now live. And had any antient Law or Form come down by chance unvary'd; yet it could have brought no certainty with it of its Riſe: it muſt have paſs'd in account with the reſt, and could not have given any proof of its elder deſcent. From what diſtance it came, and what in the mean time had hapned to it, who ſhould have inform'd us?

It is manifeſt, that the interval of ſome three hundred years muſt caſt ſo much uncertainty upon all Oral Report; that it can never pretend to any the leaſt Credit, at the diſtance, ſuppoſe of *Edward* the Third. But how ſhall any be afforded it, if we mount up three hundred years higher, and ſuppoſe the Hearſay to deſcend from the Conquerours Days? For (to ſpeak at the eaſieſt rate) of Him, had there been no writing, we ſhould, I preſume, have known as much as we do of King *Arthur*; or have had juſt as much certainty of his deſcent from *Normandy*, as we have of *Brute*'s coming from *Troy*. A believing People we once were, when from that Story of *Brute* we challenged precedence in a Council: But we had, it may be, a further deſign in it, a very conſiderable one for thoſe days; and had a mind to claim kindred with *Rome*.

To

Chap. 4. *The Uncertainty of Oral Tradition in Temporal Affairs.*

To conclude therefore, a certain term of years there is, beyond which all the foregoing Time, is Time out of mind; and utterly fabulous: whether it be two, three, or four hundred years, the Reader shall determine. But such a limited Sphere there is; as in space, for our Sight, and for our Hearing; so in time, for humane Memory. At such a distance of years the truth of Tradition grows so obscure, that the addition of as many more years does darken it but little more: the Uncertainty before being so great, that it was scarce capable of any Accession.

## CHAP. V.

*That there is not much more reason for the certainty of Oral Tradition in Eccleſiaſtical Affairs, than in Temporal.*

THis is the Case of Humane Affairs, and whether in Religion it be much different, we shall now enquire. For it may be allow'd us that such a concurrence of extraordinary Attention, Memory, Comprehension, and Uprightness of Understanding, that is requisite for a Verbal or Summary Tradition, cannot be suppos'd to continue to very many descents in Temporal Subjects: But is it not to be imagin'd (they will say) that the uttermost ability and care of Man will be imploy'd, where the Discourse is made by God, or his particular Order, and the reporting of it infinitely concerns the Eternal Welfare of Humane Kind? To prevent the suspicion of such a Disparity, and to preserve to our selves the liberty of Judging in this matter by our ordinary measures, let us observe,

(1.) That no gift of Memory is here to be supposed: For tho' the Text of *bringing all things to remembrance*, might prove an indefectibility of Memory, as well as that other of *leading into all Truth*, argues an Infallibility of Judgment, yet that Fancy not being advanced by our Ad-

 verſaries,

Chap. 5. *No more reaſon of Certainty in Eccleſiaſtical, than in Temporal Tradition.*

verſaries, I deſire their pardon for bringing it into their Minds. Further we muſt not imagin any Art of Memory invented and us'd on this occaſion. Neither yet have they told us of any Order of Men inſtituted for this purpoſe; that there were Recorders and Remembrancers amongſt the Chriſtians, as Readers there were, we know. Thoſe too whoſe Lips ſhould preſerve this Knowledge, ſucceeded not by Families, where the Tradition might have been ſuck'd in with the Milk, and deſcended by Inheritance; as with the *Jews* and *Egyptians*. There were not neither any Academies then Erected, in which men might have been ſuppoſed to have been train'd up from their youth, for this Traditional Performance: And in the Eccleſiaſtical Family of each Church, the inferior Orders did but meanly prepare towards it; neither requiring any great comprehenſion of things, nor exerciſing the faculty of Memory much; ſuch as the Office of keeper of the Door, of Reader, *&c.* The Imployment too of the Deacons, was chiefly Oeconomical, to receive and to diſtribute the publick Money, and to make Proviſion for the Clergy and the Poor. The *Presbyters* themſelves, by reaſon of the diſperſion of the People, and the exigence of the times, had very little leiſure, from Viſiting, Catechiſing, Exhorting and Encouraging; and accordingly they were choſe into that Order, more for their Godly Simplicity, and holy Zeal, than for the greatneſs of their other Talents: That of Memory particularly, being never requir'd at an Election, nor underſtood by any Interpreter, to be one of thoſe Qualifications St. *Paul* preſcribes, either for a Prieſt, or a Biſhop. And laſtly, when the Epiſcopal See was vacant, it was fill'd, not by the Senior Presbyter, or by ſuch a one whom the Biſhop had deſign'd, and to whom he had left the Tradition; but by any other perſon, whom the Congregation did otherwiſe value and deſire. So were men then taken to govern the Church; ſome that were but juſt come into the Presbytery, as St. *Cyprian*; very often from the other Orders, as in *Rome* frequently from that of the Deacons; often from other courſes of life, from Politick Adminiſtrations, the Bar, or profane Philoſophy; and thoſe ſometimes not yet Baptis'd, as St. *Ambroſe*, *Nectarius*,

*Basilius*, and *Synesius*; from very mean Employments, and Mechanick Trades, as Carpenters, Smiths, *&c.* if *Gregory Nazianzen* may be credited in his time for the East, who speaks (to say no more) as if Synods had been then fill'd with that sort [a]. Now, what was the study generally of those at that time in the West, St. *Hierom* will inform us, in his Dialogue against the *Luciferians*. [b] Where he pleads, that *the same Excuse of Ignorance is to be allowed both to the Bishop, and to the Layman, who had fallen into the* Arrian *Heresy. For a Bishop* (says he) *may be deceived as well as a Layman. But a Bishop you'll say could not be misled. As if Bishops were chose to their Sees, from the Schools of* Plato *or* Aristotle; *and as if there were but a very few of them that were not extraordinarily skill'd in such Knowledge: as if too those in Orders of our days that are Learned, did study to understand the depth of the Scripture; and did not make it their chiefest care how they shall tickle the Peoples ears with Declamatory Flourishes.* So much St. *Jerom* says in his Patron Pope *Damasus* his Family, and at *Rome*. But under the next Pontificate the Characters of that Clergy and City are described more plainly, [c] *The place is called* Babylon, *and the* Scarlet Whore, *the Clergy a Senate of* Pharisees, *and not so much as a pretended Scribe amongst them.* Something indeed is to be abated in that place, for St. *Jerom*'s heat; but that cannot be done without impairing the Credit of a Witness our Adversaries sometimes want; (who must admit his Satyr if they take his Complement) and without confessing, that Holy men might misrepresent in the Judgments they give down. For,

[a] *Carmin.* 11. Εἰς Ἐπισκόπους.

[b] Deceptio tam Laici quam Episcopi communis est. At Episcopus errare non potuit. Revera de *Platonis* & *Aristotelis* sinu in Episcopatum alleguntur. Quotus enim quisque est qui non apprime in his eruditus sit? Denique, ex literatis quicunque hodie Ordinatur id habent curæ non quomodo Scripturarum medullas ebibant, sed quomodo aures Populi declamatorum flosculis mulceant.

[c] Cum in *Babylone* versarer, & purpuratæ Meretricis essem colonus, volui garrire aliquid de Spiritu Sancto, *&c.* & ecce *Pharisæorum* conclamavit Senatus, & nullus *Scriba* vel fictu, *&c.* *Hieron.* Præf. in Librum *Didymi.* de *Sp. S.*

(2.) We must not think that former Ages were not subject to Passions and Infirmities as well as the latter, so we shall not wisely enquire of these things. We must not imagine, that always in every Generation, the care and dili-

Chap 5. *No more reason of Certainty in Ecclesiastical, than in Temporal Tradition.*

gence of the Successours, was equal to that of the Apostles; and that the want of extraordinary Abilities or Institution was supply'd by extraordinary labour and application. For the sincere endeavour of Man does not always answer the great moment of the Errand, or the Majesty of the Author: neither need we any thing more than our own experience to inform us; that Mankind is as much concern'd for this life as for the next; and for the Commands of Man, as of God; notwithstanding the vast disproportion. We might say further, for ordinary reason will tell it us, that those who break Laws will not much care to keep them any way; and will not be at any wonderful pains to instruct their Memory, to upbraid their Judgment and their Will. So that as few Ages will suffer us to presume of any extraordinary Industry or Integrity in this Affair; some there are which will not allow us to say there was any at all: when it was well, that even Books could keep themselves; and that the less they were used, they lasted the longer; or that they were so far neglected, as not to be destroy'd.

Instances of perverse Inclination, and stupid negligence of this kind, might be given in Christian Ages: But, because these are the subject of our Dispute, we will at present look in the Old Testament. and there, not to take notice that the Serpent was able to obscure in *Eve* the first Command, she, new made, receiv'd from her Husband, he just before from God; not to mention that forgetfulness of God, that over-ran the World in less time (according to the *Hebrews*) than has now pass'd since Christ, and which deserved the Deluge: you find, after that terrible punishment and exemplary warning, the new wash'd world, the Descendants of *Noah*, intirely relaps'd into Idolatry within 500 years, say the *Hebrews*; (the Seventy but a thousand,) though *Noah* himself, the Preacher of Righteousness, lived three hundred of them, warning the new world, with as little Success as he had the old.

Further, the *Israelites*, the Seed of Faithful *Abraham*, and a peculiar People, after their miraculous Redemption from *Pharaoh*, their Law wonderfully and terribly delivered by God himself, after all the mighty Signs by the hands of

of *Moſes*, and *Joſhua*; all their ſeveral Exhortations and Precautions, which we read, but they neglected; fell back again into Heatheniſm in the Third Generation, within the compaſs of 200 year. So little reaſon is there to preſume of any miraculous Care or Sincerity from the Sons of men in Religious Subjects; for, beſides that Intereſt and Humour take place there too; it is well if our Attention is not ſlacker, and our perception duller, and the Impreſſions on the Memory conſequently weaker, on this, than on other Occaſions.

Chap. 5. *No more reaſon of Certainty in Eccleſiaſtical, than in Temporal Tradition.*

(3.) But, beſides all this, ſuch care and induſtry of Memory is not to be ſuppos'd, where there was no ſuch extraordinary need of its help. For in the firſt years of Chriſtianity the Skill of Writing was as common all over the *Roman* Empire, as now it is in *Europe*: and, tho' ſome Superſtitions had forbid the uſe of it in things Sacred, yet our Religion practis'd it from the beginning. The Evangeliſts writ their Narratives, the Apoſtles ſent Letters; in which Scriptures Myſteries are ſpoke out, as Sacred, and as Oppoſite to Jewiſh or Heathen Opinions, as any Oral Tradition would pretend to whiſper. There Chriſt Crucify'd was publiſh'd, and the fooliſhneſs of Preaching was to be read; the Sacrament of Chriſts Supper laid down, its Elements and Form of Inſtitution Recorded by the Evangeliſts, by St. *Paul*, and afterwards openly mention'd without ſcruple by *Juſtin Martyr* and *Ireneus*: However it came to paſs, that in the following Ages Chriſtians grew to be more ſhie on that Subject before the promiſcuous People; and began to think it convenient to have Myſteries and Secrets, as well as the *Jews*, or *Heathens*. But ev'n then when they did not ſpeak plain in their common Sermons, they were not ſo reſerv'd in their Writings that came abroad, but their meaning might be eaſily ſpell'd; for why ſhould they make ſuch an impenetrable Secret of that, which every Chriſtian knew, and any falſe Brother might tell?

And beſides, had they been more reſerv'd on ſome few Matters, yet in others there was no need. For ſuppoſe to avoid Scandal, they would not publiſh in Writing their Adoration of what appeared to be Bread, for fear of giving,

Chap. 5. *No more reason of Certainty in Ecclesiastical, than in Temporal Tradition.*

ving Countenance to the Superstition of the *Egyptians* towards Beef, and Mutton, and Sallets; nor their Worship of Angels, of the Virgin and Saints, or of Images, for fear of encouraging the other Gentile Idolatries: yet what harm had there been if the rest had been writ; that there were seven Sacraments, that the Intention of the Priest was necessary to them, that there was a Purgatory, *&c*? Or where had been the offence, if that had been seen in Writing which we now look for; that the Bishop of *Rome*, or the Majority of the rest should never mistake in the Rules of their own Religion? But after all, if Christians would not have made any writing publick, yet nothing hinder'd but that they might have had them for their private use, in the Custody of the Bishop and Presbytery: in whose hands the Doctrine (for Example) of Transubstantiation it self, tho' written, was as likely to be kept Secret; as it would be, though unwritten, by those thousands of Laymen that knew it as well as the Clergy.

Against the first and last of these three Reflections, I have been making, there is but one Instance that can be alledged in Christianity, of the injoyn'd use of memory, and the prohibition of Writing; and that is in the case of the Creed, which the *Catechumens* were sometimes heretofore order'd to get without book, and forbidden to write. But the Apostles Creed we know is a very short lesson, that any mans memory may easily retain; and in some places it was then shorter than it is now. And as it will be always necessary for a Christian to have in his mind the Abstract of his Faith; so it was more necessary then, in the midst of Unbelievers; for whom he was to be prepared, either to resist, or to instruct them. It was too thought fit at that time, when Christians were afraid lest their Rites and Forms should be mimick'd, or otherwise ridicul'd by the Heathen, to the scandal of the weaker Brother, or the obduracy of the yet Unconverted; that this Sacred Form of our Belief, should not be lightly expos'd into Strangers hands. For both those Reasons, the young Christian was directed to commit the Creed to Memory, and not to trust it to Paper; as he was too for the last of them

Chap. 5. *No more reason of Certainty in Ecclesiastical, than in Temporal Tradition.*

them admonisht not to con it, or repeat it, in the hearing of an Unbeliever. But all the while, this brief form, to be remembred by each for their particular use, was so far from depending upon Memory for its Transmission, that it was actually written for the use of the Church; and that those very Authors who have told us of the Prohibition, (for we are beholding to Writing even for the knowledge of that) have at the same time given us the Creed in Writing, and their own large explications of it beside. Their explication of that Article concerning the Church, we shall have an occasion to thank them for hereafter; and we shall find too, not only that the Creed might be wrote; but that it was nothing else than what was expresly writ in the Scriptures before.

*See the fourth Chapter of the 2d. Discourse.*

It appears then, that Oral Tradition has no peculiar place in Christianity. This the Modern Patrons of it should in discretion have consider'd betimes; and not have suffer'd themselves to fall so short of their Masters in the advantage of the Supposition.

The *Jews*, from whom they borrowed the Fancy, did not think it fit to go alone; but supported that Fable with others. For first, they suppose it forbid by God to write down some sort of Precepts; and that of those Precepts this prohibition was one: and then, when they had made Memory so necessary, they provided a peculiar method to inform it. *Moses* must be supposed, in his long Conversation on the Mount, to have been sufficiently instructed himself; and when he came down, he took a very singular Course with the Children of *Israel*. He first sent for *Aaron* and declar'd to him alone all the Precepts distinctly: then for his Sons, and repeated the same Lesson to them, in the presence of the Father. Afterwards the seventy Elders were call'd in; and they, in the hearing of *Aaron* and his Sons, were taught in like manner: and lastly, the whole People were admitted to the Company, and receiv'd the same Instruction. So that from *Moses* his mouth, *Aaron* had now heard the Law four times, his Sons thrice, the Elders twice, and the People once. This done, *Moses* departs, and leaves the like Task to *Aaron*, for a tryal of his Memory:

Pocockii *Porta Mosis*, pag. 5tâ. &c.

Chap. 5. *No more reaſon of Certainty in Eccleſiaſtical, than in Temporal Tradition.*

Memory: who accordingly rehearſes to the whole Audience, and then withdraws. Then his Sons ſtand up, and after a like repetition, retire too. And laſtly, the Elders, having been four times inform'd, make to the People their fourth Recital, upon which they all go home, and inſtruct their ſeveral Families.

By this contrivance, the Law at its firſt ſetting forth, has paſs'd ſo often through the mouth, that it deſerves already the name of Oral: and we by theſe Circumſtances of Care in the beginning, are prepar'd to imagine the ſame diligence in the following ſucceſſions. Theſe Elders, one may think, would not fail to tranſmit to the next; and ſo the Tradition deſcended through hands either unknown, and whoſe names it would not take along with it; or elſe ſo remote, that they muſt ſtretch very far to meet; 'till it came into the care of *Samuel*. and now we are well; for he was a great Perſon, and diſcharged his truſt no doubt. From him, by Perſons that muſt too be nameleſs, it went down to *Jeremiah*, thence to *Baruch*, and ſo to *Ezra*. In his Cuſtody it was lodged ſafe, and after that found a conveyance, by men ſcarce ever remembred but on this occaſion, for ſix or ſeven hundred years together; 'till at laſt ſometime after the utter diſperſion of the *Jews* by *Adrian*, it was thought neceſſary to conſider the accidents that might happen to this Tradition, if truſted any longer to memory: upon which, *Rabbi Juda* the Holy, ventur'd upon the breach of one Precept, to ſecure all the reſt, and ſo reduc'd them into Writing. This Book is the *Miſnah*, and the Commentary upon it, made not long after, the *Talmud*.

This is the Pedigree of *Jewiſh* Tradition; ſomething like that of our Kings from *Adam*; drawn at length with formality enough, and wanting nothing but certainty. However the *Jews* are to be commended for this, that they dreſs up the Story as well as they can; and appear ſo much in earneſt, as to endeavour for credit. The great performance is not ſuppos'd by them to be done in our days, and by ſuch men as now live, but to have been finiſh'd fourteen hundred year ago: And then they are ſo ingenuous as to put another ſtop to their Traditions, and to take ſome care

care that we be not oppreſs'd by their overflow; allowing us to believe no ſuch Oral account, that has been ever under a diſpute: ſo far are they from taking that ſort of conveyance for the ſureſt.

Whereas on the contrary, our Modern Traditioners are ſo bold with us, as to uſe no caution, nor ſet any bounds: neither are they at any pains, or ſhew any contrivances; bunglingly ſetting up their extravagant conceit without either Support or Ornament. They beſtow none of their Legends upon this Fable, and prepare us with no inducing Circumſtance; not telling us ſo much as the hands that ſhould tranſmit the Tradition: unwilling, it may be, to name to that Office any other Biſhops than the Popes; and then not daring to truſt their Story to the Credit of ſuch Reporters. The whole therefore is left at large; the Father is to tell the Son; and ſo the Tradition is to be propagated as naturally as Mankind.

A Tradition propagated in that manner, is certainly no better deſcended than any common Spurious Relation, that has no other father but the People. But that abſurd Hypotheſis, tho' mention'd here, yet is too groſs to be purſued further. Our Deſign in this Chapter was more general, and againſt wiſer Adverſaries: being only to ſhew, that Chriſtian Tradition is not to be exempted from the common frailties and uncertainties incident to Oral Reports.

Chap. 6. *The certainty of Eccleſiaſtical Tradition particularly conſidered.*

## CHAP. VI.

### *The Certainty of Eccleſiaſtical Tradition particularly Conſidered.*

WE are then at Liberty to Judge of Tradition in Spiritual, and in Temporal Matters, much after the ſame manner; and cannot in prudence, after ſome aſſignable Tract of years, admit for Teſtimony hear-ſays of one ſort, rather than another.

All, I ſay, which on this Subject has been laid down before, muſt be allow'd to be as true in Eccleſiaſtical Tradition; and we need not here proceed any further to draw the eaſy Parallel; but reckon on the ſame diſtance of time as abſolutely immemorial; and look upon the Ages beyond it, as fabulous, and in utter darkneſs.

But we will not uſe the extremity of our Right, nor paſs Sentence in ſo peremptory a manner; but will, with the Readers leave, give theſe Eccleſiaſtical Hear-ſays more reſpect; conſider them more particularly, and have the patience to make the following deductions.

If then of 1600 years that have paſs'd ſince Chriſt, we conſider the ſpace of two or three Centuries, and thoſe of a middle indifferent rate, ſuppoſing them extraordinary neither in their Care nor Negligence; remembring that Memory was no particular qualification of a Chriſtian; and that their mediocrity of Memory needed not to be ſtrained, when Writing was ſo much in uſe, and at hand; this conſider'd, and ſuppos'd,

1. As to Verbal Reports: if we will favourably ſuppoſe that ſomething in our Saviours or the Apoſtles own words might have deſcended down to the Survivers of the two or three hundredth year, preſerved by ſuch uncertain accidental memory, yet it can never be ſurmis'd to have been any thing of length, of the length of a ſhort Chapter we may ſay, were it a Parable or continued Story; much leſs if it were a number of Unconnected Sayings, like a Chapter of the

Chap. 6. *The certainty of Ecclesiastical Tradition particularly consider'd.*

the *Proverbs*. We see therefore that we cannot expect either much new Text, nor much interpretation of the old in Apostolical words: the Bulk after three or indeed two hundred years could not be very considerable.

And besides, (*2dly*) if they pretend not to any continued Discourse, but only to Unconnected Sayings, we are to consider, that such Sayings, if any, coming down without the Context and Circumstances of the Discourse to which they related, may have often an uncertain Authority. For tho' spoke by an Apostle, yet distinction must be made, whether they were spoke in our Lords name, or in his own; whether too by way of permission or advice only, or else of positive precept. And then further, if we take their Authority for certain, yet their sence will frequently be ambiguous and undetermin'd, not to be securely limited or amplified without more precise direction. For Example, Suppose these words, *This is my Body*, had been transmitted Orally, as said on occasion of the Blessed Sacrament: if they had been taken for an Answer of Christs to a Disciple enquiring what the substance of the Sacrament was, they would have attested to Transubstantiation: but if it had been known that no such question was made, and that Christ spoke of that Bread which he took and brake at Supper, their meaning must then be perfectly different; especially if it had been told, that it was ordinary for Christ to speak in such Figures; and that particularly, something like this was frequent with the *Jews* in their Paschal Phrase.

But (*3dly*) Admit there were any Sayings came so contingently down, whose Authority was certain, and sense determin'd; they must have been such as were kept up and remembred, because there was all along present occasion for them. For if they had not been in ordinary use, there is no reason to think they would have been distinctly preserved. Of this kind are those Traditions, mention'd by *Ireneus* and *Tertullian*; being nothing else than some of those Articles, that make what we call the Apostles Creed: *As that God the Father was Maker of Heaven and Earth; and that his Son Jesus was born of the Virgin, that he Suffered, was Crucify'd, Dead, and Buried, and rose up again.* &c. These Circumstantial

Iren. l. 1. c. 2. Tert. *de Præscr.* c. 13.

Chap. 6. *The certainty of Eccleſiaſtical Tradition particularly conſidered.*

cumſtantial particulars were ſuch as directly oppoſed the firſt Hereſies of Chriſtianity, that either deny'd the Father of Chriſt to be the Creator, or that Chriſt was born really a man, or really ſuffered *&c*; (Thoſe againſt whom the Apoſtle St. *John* and *Ignatius* writ.) And ſuch plain Truths as theſe, of ſuch conſtant and daily uſe, no wonder if they were remembred in the firſt Age; and not forgot neither in the ſecond, when *Marcion* and *Valentinus* broach'd again the ſame Hereſies, and denying the Authority of the Scriptures were properly refuted by this Traditional Evidence.

But then we muſt obſerve; that theſe Traditionary Articles, remembred occaſionally and on particular Exigences, when brought out by *Ireneus* and *Tertullian*, are produced by the laſt of the two at no great diſtance, not much above a hundred years after the death of St. *John*; neither yet are they ſupplemental to the Scripture, but a brief recital only, of ſome few paſſages, of thoſe which are there found written at large.

Theſe Articles, properly ſpeaking, belong not to this head, not being reported verbatim; as may appear from the difference of Phraſe even in theſe two Authors. But if the Tranſmiſſion of ſuch few neceſſary Articles in exact words for ſo little a time, would not induce us to allow Verbal Tradition much more ſcope, nor much longer continuance: neither is the Tranſmiſſion of their ſence, ſhould we ſuppoſe that, to prevail further with us. For in the general,

2. If Tradition ſhall pretend not to the very Sayings, but only to the Effect and Subſtance: it is obvious with what uncertainty they muſt be tranſmitted. For how know I with what Judgment the Apoſtles ſaying was underſtood by him that gave the Abſtract, whether he conceived the meaning aright, did not give a Byas to it, and whether he rightly expreſſed it. This might well happen at the firſt hand, but that it did not in any of the 10 or 15 that were to give it down, who can promiſe? The Scripture it ſelf informs us of two ſuch miſtakes which aroſe immediately; one in matter of Fact, and another in Doctrine. Our Saviours indeterminate Anſwer concerning St. *John*, *If I will* *Joh.* 21. 23.

*that*

*that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?* went abroad among the Disciples for a positive affirmation, *that that Disciple should not dye*: whereas, *Jesus said not he shall not dye, but*, &c. So easily were the Hypothetical words of our Saviour lost in the Relation; and other Categorical ones reported by the Disciples: either from their want of attention, or misunderstanding; their minds being prepossess'd with the thoughts of our Saviour's particular love to St. *John*, or led by the humane inclination to believe and tell a strange Story. This mistake would have set up for a Tradition in matter of Fact: see another in an Article of Faith. *Certain men*, say the Apostles in Council to the *Gentiles* of *Antioch*, *which went out from us, have troubled you with words, subverting your Souls, saying, ye must be Circumcis'd, and keep the Law; to whom we gave no such Commandment.* They Preach'd, it seems, the necessity of Circumcision; concluding it from some Words or Actions of the Apostles, and delivering it for their mind: Whereas the Tradition came not from them, but from the weakness or prejudice of the Reporters. No stress therefore can be laid on such Summary Traditions: They in proportion abating of their Evidence, as they ease the Memory.

Chap. 6. *The certainty of Ecclesiastical Tradition particularly considered.*

Acts 15. 24.

We see then, that Oral Report, after some Successions, as many as may happen in much less than 300 years, can have no Authority of its own: whatever it has, even at lesser distances, must be borrowed from other Supports; and it can be credited only, as it comes confirm'd by concurring Testimony.

Now corroborating Testimony there may be of two sorts, either from other agreeing Reports, or from Writing.

(1.) If Oral Tradition will accept the assistance of Writing; it may gain credit, and deserve to be believed. For so, those Traditions *Ireneus* mentions, that obtain'd among the Barbarous Nations, were confirmed fully by the Apostolick Writing; and what *Ireneus* heard from *Polycarp* of our Saviour's Miracles and Discourse, which *Polycarp* had received from those that were present, was gladly heard by him, *for it was agreeable to the Holy Scriptures.*

Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* lib. 5. c. 20.

But such an Attestation our Oral Tradition cannot pretend

Chap. 6. *The certainty of Eccleſiaſtical Tradition particularly conſidered.*

tend to; for it is ſet up in oppoſition to Writing, and is to tell us thoſe things which we no where read.

(2.) As to the other way of Confirmation; if a Diſcourſe be ſpoke in an Aſſembly; and the Perſons of that Audience, without conferring together before, agree after in the ſame report, it ſhall be taken for unqueſtionably true; and if they differ in ſome Circumſtances, yet the Subſtance in which they conſent, ſhall be credited: But if they have been influenced one by another, and there has been Communication between them, their Evidence will not have the ſame force, and if too punctual, will be juſtly ſuſpected of Confederacy. Now when the Apoſtles went Preaching over all the World, delivering the Doctrine of the Goſpel as they went; as their Diſciples might remember the chief Heads of their Diſcourſe; and the Auditors ev'n of theſe might remember ſuch as were remarkable, and in which they took themſelves to be principally concern'd: ſo, when the Believers of ſeveral diſtant Countries, came at ſome diſtance of time, to compare their ſeveral Traditions receiv'd apart; there could be no poſſible doubt of the truth of that Doctrine, in which they all concurr'd. And, if then thoſe Traditions had been reduced into Writing; their Authority would have been juſtly ſacred with us; and had they not been admitted into the Canon, they would have deſerv'd to be bound up with it, and regarded in a very near degree. From ſuch Traditions, the Ancient Writers, *Tertullian* particularly and *Ireneus*, argue againſt the Hereticks that deny'd or deprav'd the Scriptures; and the Argument, in their Circumſtances, as it was proper, ſo was abſolutely Convincing. By ſuch a Compariſon of Truths the Scriptures themſelves, tho' they wanted not ſuch an Evidence, were confirm'd in their Authority; and their Canon or Rule ſettled. Now 'till that time and ſomewhat after, Oral Tradition might well ſerve, eſpecially in ſome eminent notable Articles of neceſſary daily uſe; and the report of one place be ſtrengthened by the Concurrence of the reſt. But, in after Ages, when the Churches came to inter-communicate more frequently, and imbody by Politick conſtitutions; and eſpecially, when the leſſer Biſhopricks

Chap. 6. *The certainty of Eccleſiaſtical Tradition particularly conſidered.*

ricks came to be more formally under the direction of the greater, *Rome*, *Alexandria*, *Antioch*, *Conſtantinople*, &c; it was no wonder that the meaner and dependent follow'd the Advice of the greater and more Potent: and then, if the World was found to be in the ſame Leſſon, the Common conſent might as well proceed from the Influence of the Court, from the Authority of ſome one or more of the great Biſhops gaining the reſt, from Imitation and Contagion of Example in the generality; as from the Unity of Truth, and ſimplicity of an unconſtrain'd unaffected agreement. For which reaſon, Traditions that continued Oral for 500 year, as they are to be utterly rejected by reaſon of that diſtance from their Original, ſo cannot have any acceſſional Authority given them from the agreement of the Churches of that Age. Much leſs is the preſent *Roman* Church in any Article to urge upon us her conſent with the Modern *Greeks* with whom ſhe actually correſponded for eight or nine hundred year, and upon whom ſhe is known to have been practiſing ever ſince. But of much leſs Authority yet, is the Agreement, or rather Conſpiracy of the Weſtern ſince that time: a ſworn Conſpiracy of the Clergy under the Pope their General, to beat down any Truth, that ſhould be againſt the Intereſts of the Church-Men, and contradict the Common gainful Superſtitions.

When therefore the Authority of a precedent Age is preſſed upon us; we are not ſo much to conſider, how long we come after that Age, as how long that Age came after the firſt. For they they are to be believed concerning things ſaid before, not by their diſtance from us, but by their nearneſs to the Apoſtles: as a man that lives all his time at *Kenſington*, is of his own knowledge no better a Witneſs of what was ſaid at *Weſtminſter-Hall*, than if he had lived at the Lands-end. If then the Age that was mention'd to us was out of the hearing of the firſt, and removed at a fabulous diſtance; its Tradition, which was uncertain a thouſand year ago, will become no more certain a thouſand years after, than what is a lye now, will grow true a thouſand years hence. The Tradition will be in it ſelf no truer;

truer; tho' it may, we confeſs, be told by a Church ſo long, that ſhe may at laſt believe it her ſelf.

Chap. 6. *The certainty of Eccleſiaſtical Tradition particularly conſidered.*

And therefore when the times of *Gregory* the Pope, and *Auſtin* the Monk are vouch'd; and they are ſaid to be Saints of above a thouſand years old: we are to reckon upon the 600 years that went before them; and to remember, that all the Oral Tradition of that time muſt be twice an arrant Fable. Nay, if the 5*th* Age be alledg'd, we muſt conſider then too the immemorial Diſtance, and oblivious force of four hundred years; that as there was room enough for ſome ſuperſtitious conceits to creep in, ſo it was utterly unlikely that much of Apoſtolical Sayings ſhould be memorially convey'd ſo far.

For thoſe Perſons that then lived, however we at our great diſtance call them Ancients, look'd upon themſelves as of latter date. *Vincentius*, who wrote in the year 434, in the Rules he gives for Catholick Doctrine, orders Antiquity to be follow'd, as he there calls it: and of thoſe Ancients he refers to, St. *Cyprian* was the Eldeſt; who liv'd before him not 200 year. Thoſe too of St. *Cyprian's* age, eſteem'd themſelves far remov'd from the Apoſtles days; and he himſelf reckon'd upon the paſt time, as large enough, not only to render the Truths of the Goſpel Antient, but to bring in after-errors, and let them grow old too. For, when Pope *Stephen* would have regulated a controvered Practice by his *Roman* Tradition, St. *Cyprian* asks *what Tradition was meant, whether that of the Goſpels and Epiſtles*, to which he was ready to Subſcribe? if any other was intended, *the Antient Tradition* (he ſays) *might be an Antient Errour*: that in any doubtful Caſe, they were to conſult the Scriptures; and when *they were at a loſs for Truth, they were not to truſt ſuch Aqueducts as would hold no water, but paſs by thoſe faulty Pipes, and immediately repair to the Fountain that was at hand.* Theſe are but part of St. *Cyprian's* expreſſions on this Subject; who treats the unwritten Tradition of his own times with as little reſpect, as we can ſhew to any that ſhall offer it ſelf now 1400 years after.

*Cypr.* ad *Pompeium.* Unde eſt iſta Traditio? utrumne de Dominicâ & Evangelicâ Autoritate, *&c.*

For

Chap. 6. *The certainty of Ecclesiastical Tradition particularly considered.*

For to come from Speculation to Fact; we shall find the Course that Oral Tradition had in the Christian World, was very narrow, and very short. For so it came to pass; by reason, I suppose, of those Uncertainties we have traced out; that Oral Reports, many no doubt in the first Age, and by which Christians were in many places chiefly directed, yet in a little longer time, and as soon as the Canon of Scripture was brought together, began to decrease in their number, and to lose their Authority; insomuch, that those who lived within the distance of 200 years from the Apostles, and whose Books are full of Allegations from Scripture; scarcely make use of a Saying or two from that Traditional Authority: whether it was, that they were then most of them lost; or few of them credited; or those that were credited, did not differ from what was written. Of this Observation the Writings of *Ireneus*, *Tertullian*, *Origen*, and *Cyprian* are pregnant Testimonies. From *Ireneus* alone, one might recover a good part of the Gospels; but of Traditional Doctrine, not six lines. And by one of those Traditions, (to observe the fate of them) that Holy Father was led into the Millenary mistake.

The fortune which the Labours of *Papias* found, is another instance. He was Bishop of *Hierapolis*, an Acquaintance of *Polycarp*'s; and had familiarly conversed with several Auditors of the Apostles, from whom he studiously enquired concerning their Actions and Discourses; *What* Peter, *what* Thomas, *what* James *or* John *were wont to say:* (for he was of the Opinion, as *Eusebius* tells us, *that what was to be read in the Scriptures was not so edifying, as that which might be had by the living voice.*) Of these Relations he pick'd up so many, that he made up five Books; and then we were in a fair way, if ever, of having some certainty in this kind. But he had gather'd together so much *Fable and Paradox*, that *Eusebius*, upon occasion of his Millenary Tradition, was forced to give us his Character; how *he was a very weak man, as might be discerned by his way of Writing; and that he put down things in one sense, which were spoke in another.* The little therefore of his Writings we have, we owe to *Eusebius*; for so small

Euseb. *Hist. Eccl. lib.* 3. c. 39.

account was made by the World of his five Books, that they were all quickly lost, and that well-meant Collection of Hear-says returned again upon Oral Tradition.

Chap. 6. *The certainty of Ecclesiastical Tradition particularly considered.*

There is, I confess, honourable mention made by some Ancients of Unscriptural Traditions; and such a mention, as might at first sight incline one to believe, that there had been some very weighty thing preserved that way: but a nearer view of those places will quickly undeceive us; and the particular they give in of those matters easily instruct us; how much the general expressions are to be restrain'd, or how far disregarded.

For to begin with *Clemens Alexandrinus*, the honour he does to Unwritten Tradition, is so justly disparaged by the Apocryphal particulars he produces, and by the Allegories he derives thence, (things in which Fancy has more to do than Memory;) that our very Adversaries never think fit much to insist upon it.

*Tertullian* indeed is always alledg'd for this purpose, in that famous place of his Book *de Coronâ Militis*. There the Author, at other times over-subtle and over-proving, but now a rigid *Montanist* endeavours to prove the wearing of a Garland unlawful for Christians, by their former abstaining from that Common fashion. In order therefore to the raising an Argument from Negative Custom, he thinks himself oblig'd by his Subject, as well as by the Confirmation of *Montanus*, to make the Positive of great Authority: and accordingly he gives out the Present Observations then practis'd in common by the Catholick-Church, and the *Montanists*, for Primitive necessary Ordinances; as you have them in the Margin rendred from his own words.

There are several Examples of observations which we hold by virtue of no Writing; but only by the Title of Tradition patroniz'd by Custom.

To begin with Baptism, when we are going into the Water, and before too in the Church; we profess under the hands of the Priest, that we *Renounce the Devil, and his Pomp and Angels*: after that, we are dipt thrice; answering something more than our Lord has prescribed in the Gospel. When we come out we tast the mixture of Milk and Honey: and from that time for a whole Week we abstain from our daily Bathing. The Sacrament of the Eucharist, which our Lord appointed to be taken at Meals, and by all promiscuously, we take in our Assemblies before day, and only from the hands of the Presidents. We

We make Oblations for the Dead, and keep yearly their Birth-days [ into the other World. ] We hold it a great Crime to Faſt, or to Kneel at Prayers on a *Sunday*. The ſame Priviledge we enjoy, all the time from *Eaſter* to *Whitſontide*. We are much troubled that any, even of our own Bread or Drink ſhould fall upon the ground. When ever we move or go about any thing; when we come in, or go out; when we put on our Shooes, when we Waſh, when we are at Table; when Candles are lighted, when we lye or ſit down; what ever Action we are upon; we ſtill wear away, as it were, our Forehead by Signing it with the Croſs. *Tert. de Coron. Mil. Cap.* 3.

Now, becauſe ſuch Obſervations as theſe are the man things aſcribed by Antients to Tradition; I ſhall, with the Reader's leave, take this occaſion to conſider them more particularly. Theſe Uſages then are, we perceive, of two ſorts; either Forms of Words, or Rites Practical: and in both, two things are to be minded; the Fact of their Antiquity, and the Opinion either of their Neceſſity or Legality.

1. Now, as to the Antiquity of Uſages, we have ſeen already how uncertain that muſt be in Forms of Words Orally delivered; and how eaſily they may be interpolated and changed. Rites too and Geſtures, to be tranſmitted by Imitation, or practical Tradition, are as ſubject to vary in a little time, and to paſs into another mode; either by Addition or Subſtraction, from the Fancy, or from the miſtake of the Imitator: ſo that at laſt they may retain but little reſemblance of what they were at firſt; and appear no more a-kin, than a Copy a little removed would be to an Original, however it might go under the name of the firſt Maſter. Beſides this, it is very eaſie too for foreign Uſages of the Neighbourhood to ſlide in afterwards: and then, when they are once admitted into Company, and paſs for ſome time with the Elder, they very ſecurely pretend to the ſame Antiquity. Such introduced practices might without much difficulty get themſelves ſtiled Apoſtolical; either becauſe us'd in an Apoſtolical Church, that is where an Apoſtle had been heretofore; or becauſe brought in by an Apoſtolical, that is a Reverend and Orthodox Biſhop; or becauſe having been us'd immemorially, and deſcending from a time higher

Chap. 6. *The certainty of Ecclesiastical Tradition particularly considered.*

than the present, they were presum'd to have descended from the Highest, as Rain that comes from the Clouds, is said to come down from Heaven. For in those sensible things our Opinion acts as our Sight; and at such an assignable Distance, confound all further Distances; taking every thing to be equally remote, that is removed beyond such a degree: as our Eye and Fancy place the Planets, or even a Meteor of the lower Region, in the Firmament among the Fixt Stars. Now such Errours of Place, any small observation discovers, and their correction is presently admitted: but these of time, tho' easie to be observed, are not so easily corrected, because favour'd and indulg'd by the nature of Man; who, as he loves to consecrate the Original of his City, or antedate that of his Family, so is willing to have all his solemn Actions as venerably Antient as he can. And in such things it is not perhaps Civil to be very difficult; and we are rather to imitate the Courtesie of St. *Jerom*. *Let then every Province as to this matter, enjoy its own Opinion, and think as honourably of its Customs as it pleases*; provided such Customs will be Civil too, not make any claim by their Antientry, nor prescribe upon us for our Sufferance. The Tradition of these Usages is much like that of Relicks: that there were some such indifferent Ceremonies practised by the Apostles, we do not much question; but the number of them is strangely encreas'd, and which are the Genuine we know not how to tell; they are multiply'd like the wood of the Cross; and the Counterfeit is never to be discern'd. We are therefore ready to shew those that seem to be Antient; a decent respect; but for Swearing to the Truth of them, or however, for falling down and Worshipping them, we desire to be excus'd. The Antiquity of Rites is a matter of Fact, and in that we see the mistake is easie.

Unaquæq; Provincia abundet in sensu suo & præcepta Majorum Leges Apostolicas arbitretur. *Hieron.* ad *Lucinium.*

2. The other thing we are to consider of them is either their Lawfulness, or their Necessity: and this is a matter of Doctrine; descending down with them, or accruing to them, in common presumption; but admitted often upon mistake. For as such Usages are always presum'd Lawful, not

Chap. 6. *The certainty of Ecclesiastical Tradition particularly considered.*

not only from ancient Practice, but by our own; so we know how easily an Opinion of their necessity may arise. In all Customary Proceedings, Precedents at pleasure, are apt however to pass into standing Rules: and as we are naturally willing to have our own practice follow'd, and our Example go for Law; so, when we can recommend it from more antient usage, we fail not to urge the Authority; and make it a point of Reverence and Duty to our Ancestors, to follow their steps and ours. For which reason it is no wonder, that Rites which had once gain'd to be esteem'd Apostolical, should not only be taken for Lawful, but for Obligatory too, by less thinking men. Whereas on the contrary, it is so far from being certain, that Practices reputed Apostolical are necessary and perpetual; that the very true ones often were not so much to be ascrib'd to the Apostles, as to the Age they liv'd in, not being purposely instituted, but provisionally taken in, some out of Compliance meerly, and to avoid present Offences; and consequently they were not only indifferent, but might grow inexpedient, if not unlawful, in tract of time: such were the Kiss of Love; the Love Feasts; to take the Eucharist at Meals; to abstain from Blood, and things Strangled; to Circumcise a *Timothy*, &c.

For a Right Originally Expedient, remaining the same and unvary'd in it self, may yet grow to be of a contrary nature, by change of outward Circumstances: it may too in time deserve to be laid aside, for the Superstition that may be tack'd to it by the inclination of the Age. But if it has been varied, it may either suffer so much alteration, as to become another thing; or at least it may be brought by a slight, and after a little time indiscernible inoculation, to produce a Fruit of a far different kind Not to say how one that is sub-introduc'd and Novel, if it be not at the first rise apparently and grosly erroneous, may however have in it some Seed of Superstition, not then perceiv'd, nor affecting therefore the first Users, but which shall afterwards grow and exert it self, as it may be improv'd and display'd by the Corruption of the succeeding Imitators. We of our Church think we have very good

Chap. 6. *The certainty of Eccleſiaſtical Tradition particularly conſidered.*

good inſtances of theſe Matters, in many of the *Roman* Uſages. For ſo the Latin Language, once neceſſary to the Prayers of the Weſtern Church, becauſe it was the Language of thoſe Countries; is now, by their alteration of Speech, grown as improper for the ſame reaſon, and is moſt abſurdly retain'd. So the Sign of the Croſs, which formerly accompany'd Prayers, viſibly ſhewing them to be made in the name of Chriſt Crucified; has been ſince us'd Superſtitiouſly alone, and I know not what Vertue attributed to the airy Figure. By the inſertion of the Tranſubſtantiating Doctrine, the Reſpect due to the Holy Elements of the Euchariſt has paſs'd into abſolute Adoration; and the nature of that Sacrament is almoſt Tranſubſtantiated too. And laſtly, to mention no more; Prayer for the Dead, which, beſides the Teſtimony it gave to another Life, was no more at firſt than a holy Wiſh for the Deceas'd, expreſſing our Concern for their Condition; whereby our Deſire, or our Joy and Thanks for their happineſs was rather profeſs'd, than any want of it ſuppos'd to be reliev'd; and which therefore was made as frequently and as ſolemnly, for the Apoſtles and Martyrs, conſummate Saints, as for leſs Righteous Men; ſuch a Prayer was after thought to have ſome real effect for the Dead; then it was ſurmis'd to contribute to their preſent advantage, however as yet but ſparingly offer'd, and at ſet times: at length it came to be eſteem'd of ſome great benefit or other, and to be highly recommended to the Piety of their ſurviving Relations: 'till at laſt, by the coming in of Purgatory, it had a ſtated uſe, and grew to be a moſt neceſſary Office; Men beginning to make it the greateſt care of their lives not to want this Help after their death, erecting and endowing Societies for this purpoſe. So did the Errour, when once inſinuated into the Practice, grow on ſtill like a grain of Seed; till by degrees it became a Tree: which, after it was once well grafted, has ſince ſpread ſo wide, and bore ſuch Fruit, that under it all the numerous kinds of *Romiſh* Orders have been lodg'd and fed.

It were obvious to find many ſuch like Examples: but, as they may not be agreed to by our Adverſaries; ſo they are

Chap. 6.
*The certainty of Ecclesiastical Tradition particularly considered.*

are not necessary to our Design. It must be granted us that such changes are easie, and such Errours very natural: and as to *Tertullian*, to whom we now return, he himself affords an Instance of one sort; it being manifest that he was mistaken in the Duty of these Observations, even by the Confession of our Adversaries themselves, who have made no scruple of discontinuing one half of them long ago.

This his Errour about the Necessity of those Practices, will easily lead us to think him capable of the other concerning their Antiquity: an Errour the old Bishops of *Rome* have often committed, ascribing still their Modern Usages to St. *Peter* and St. *Paul*. But with this we have no just cause to charge *Tertullian*: he for his part speaks very warily in the Point, and declines to father the Observations, he reckons, upon the Apostles; giving great reason of suspicion to those who are acquainted with his manner of gaining all advantage to his Cause, that he himself was conscious enough of their later reception. It is certain that none of them needed an Apostolical Institution; that the Forms might have been devis'd by un-inspired Bishops; and that several of the Rites might as well have been brought in by succeeding Converts, from the Customs of their former Life. For that carefulness about their Bread and Drink, is still a *Jewish* Observance; and was too heretofore, in part, a *Roman* Superstition [*a*]. To Pray for the Dead, was in some sort us'd both with the *Heathens*, and the *Jews*. Not to Fast, or Kneel, on a *Sunday*, was only to pay to that day the honour of the Sabbath. The frequency too of the Sign of the Cross here mentioned, might have nothing more it it, but so many Benedictions, as the *Jews* use to this day on the same occasions [*b*]; only in this distinguish'd to the Eye, that they were made, as the Apostle directs, in the name of Christ. *Tertullian* himself tells us in other places

[*a*] Ceremonies des *Juifs* par Leo de Mod. *Part* 2. *Chap.* 10. Cibus è manu prolapsus redebatur, utique per mensas. *Plin.* Lib. 37. *C.* 2.

[*b*] Leo de Moden. *p.* 1. *Ch.* 9. *Buxtorf.* Syn. Jud. *C.* 12. *Colos.* 3. 17.

of

[c] *Tert. Apol. c.* 16. Ad Nation. *l.* 1. *c.* 13. Diem Saturni Otio & Victui decernere. Aliis diebus Lavacrum ſubtrahere, aut in veſperam differe. Ritus Lucernarum. Jejunia cum Azymis. Orationes Littorales. A Judaico more, quem ignorant.

[c] of ſeveral *Jewiſh* Cuſtoms, which the Heathen *Romans* of his time practis'd, not knowing whence they had deriv'd them. With much leſs difficulty we know might the Cuſtoms of that Religion have paſs'd into Chriſtianity; and the Chriſtians too, might in ſome time be as ignorant of their Original: and then it follow'd of courſe, that what had no known Author, and it may be no apparent ground, was to be referr'd to the common Authors of our Religion, and attributed to their poſitive appointment. That ſomething of this was the Caſe of theſe Rites *Tertullian* produces, his warineſs, we obſerv'd, will incline us to believe. But as to the fifty days after *Eaſter*, it is more particularly probable that their Feſtival Solemnity was not of ſo early a date, at leaſt at *Rome*: (not to take notice of St. *Paul*'s contrary practice obſerved by St. *Jerom.*) For it is not likely that the Interdiction of Faſting after the Reſurrection, was earlier than the obſervation of Faſting before: and there are ſome words of *Ireneus* preſerv'd by *Euſebius*, which give us a ſhrewd intimation, that *Good Friday* was not long kept at *Rome* before Pope *Soter*'s days, if *Eaſter* was. But to Conclude, however theſe Reflections may be received, we are not much concern'd in their Succeſs. For ſhould we allow, that a few indifferent Changeable Uſages might make a ſhift to paſs down ſincere from the Apoſtles, thorough ſome eightſcore years; yet Tradition would not have much to boaſt of: it ſhould rather be out of countenance, that ſo accurate and ſo vehement a Writer as *Tertullian*, when he had a mind to recommend it, ſhould have nothing more conſiderable to produce for it at ſo ſmall a diſtance.

*Acts* 21. Hier. *Ep. ad* Lucinium.

Euſeb. *l.* 5. *c.* 24. *Edit.* Vales.

Having thus conſidered this paſſage of *Tertullian*, we have at the ſame time diſpatcht another of St. *Jerom*, which is nothing elſe but a Tranſcript of this, and not made the better by being put into a *Luciferians* mouth. And indeed, *Tertullian* being once ſet aſide, a Writer ſo exact, and ſo near the Apoſtolick times, the remarks we have made

made will easily help us to examine the *Junior* Authority; the eldest of which is as distant from him, as he from the Apostles. For which reason, the Reader, I presume, would hardly excuse any further enquiry upon this Subject; were not St. *Basil*'s great Name offered for the next Testimony, and that very much insisted on by our Adversaries: which therefore I give here in the Margin.

Chap. 6. Of Decrees and Declarations preserv'd in the Church, the one we have in Writing;

and the other we have received by Tradition from the Apostles, delivered down to us in a more private manner: both which are of the same use to Religion. And this will be contradicted by none, who is but ever so little conversant in Ecclesiastical Constitutions. For if we shall go about to reject all Unscriptural Usages, as things of no great moment; we shall be in danger of maiming Religion in its Principal Parts, or rather of reducing the Preaching [*or* Declaration] to a meer sound. As for Example; to begin with the first and most common Rite; who has taught us in the Scripture that those should be Sign'd with the Sign of the Cross, who hope in the Name of our Lord Jesus? what Scripture has directed us to turn towards the *East* when we Pray? The form of Holy words said over the Elements at their Consecration, which of the Holy Writers has left us in the Scripture? For we do not think that sufficient, which the Apostle or the Gospels have Recorded; but we say both before and after, other words, as very necessary to the Mystery; which we have received by an Unscriptural Information. The Consecration of the Water and Oyle at Baptism, and of the Baptis'd Person, and the use it self of Oyle, and the Dipping thrice, and the Renunciation, are none of them from the Scripture; but from that secret and undivulg'd Instruction, which our Fathers have privately preserv'd, without any busie Curiosity, or impertinent inquiry: understanding well that Mysteries, which are to be kept venerable, were to be kept in Silence. For how was it proper that those things should stand perpetually exposed in Writing, which Strangers are not so much as once allow'd to look on? Or why did not *Moses* admit every one promiscuously into every part of the Temple? ——— Was it not out of his Wisdom, because he knew, that what is common and obvious is subject to Contempt; and that what is reserv'd and rare, is naturally indeavour'd after and esteem'd? After the same manner the Apostles and Fathers, who first Ordered the Church, procured veneration to their Mysteries, by keeping them unspoken and conceal'd. This is the reason of Unscriptural Tradition; that the knowledge of, [*or* Speculation imported by] the Decrees [*or* Ordinances] should not be an ordinary Theme, and grow into contempt by familiarity. For a Decree is one thing, and a Declaration is another. Decrees are [generally] kept under silence: but Declarations are Publisht. Now one sort of silence is, that Obscurity the Scripture uses, when it makes it a difficult thing to find out the meaning of the [Decree *or*] Ordinance: For so, all of us look toward the *East* at Prayers; but few of us know that we are seeking our old Country, that Paradise which God planted in the *East* in *Eden*. And all of us on *Sundays* pray standing; but all of us do not know the reason. For it is not only because we are risen with Christ, and are to seek those things which are above; that therefore, on that day of the Resurrection, we put our selves in mind, by our posture, of the Grace then given us: but because that day is, in some manner, the Image of the Eternity we expect. Upon which account, tho' it were the

firſt of days, yet it is not ſaid by *Moſes* to be the firſt, but the one day. For, ſays he, the Evening and the Morning were the one day: as being the ſame day, that returns to us in a frequent Revolution; and ſo repreſents to us the future State, the endleſs Day, that is to have no Evening, *&c.* (*For the Author purſues the Speculation further, and at laſt concludes*) The time would fail me, ſhould I rehearſe all the Churches Unſcriptural myſteries. I therefore paſs over the reſt; but the very Confeſſion of our Faith, to *Believe in the Father, and in the Son, and in the Holy Ghoſt*; from what Scripture is it? for, if by a Religious conſequence, we frame our Confeſſion from the inſtitution of Baptiſm, becauſe as we are Baptis'd, ſo we are to Believe; let our Adverſaries then give us leave to uſe the ſame way of conſequence, and to expreſs our Doxology conformably to our Belief: but, if they reject the form of our Doxology, becauſe it is Unſcriptural, let them then ſhew us the place, where the Creed, and the other things we have mentioned above, are ſet down in Scripture too.

"Δόγματα and Κηρύγματα I have rendred diſtinctly, as St. "*Baſil* I conceive has directed. For Δόγμα is plainly a Decree, "whether Speculative or Practical, both in the Civil and Philoſo- "phick uſe; (for ſo the Δόγματα of the Philoſophers are by *Tully* "interpreted *Decreta*:) and accordingly is either an Opinion "and Perſuaſion, or an Ordinance of ſomething to be done; moſt "commonly the latter, in Civil and in Sacred acception. And "then becauſe being only a reſolve of the Mind, or of a Council, it "does not in its nature imply Publication, and ordinarily is not "publiſhed: It is therefore ſuppoſed by this Author to be Private, "and contradiſtinguiſh'd to Κήρυγμα which is the Declaration or "Proclamation of ſuch Opinions or Ordinances. This I take to be "the Authors meaning, and our Adverſaries have no diſadvantage "by it: for I do not make Δόγμα here to ſignify an Ordinance only, "but a Doctrinal Perſuaſion too, when the ſence admits it.

This Paſſage of St. *Baſil*, which I have not been afraid to give at full length, ſeems to aggrandiſe Tradition much, and to make its uſe of very high and neceſſary importance: but, if we conſider the words nearly, and refer them to their occaſion; they will not be found to make any great matter. The intention of the Father is only to ſhew, that a * Form of Doxology, which he has before proved at large to be ſubſtantially contain'd in the Scripture, although it be not found there preciſely in the ſame words, may however be lawfully continued in the Church.

* *Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, with the Holy Ghoſt.*

And

Chap. 6. *The certainty of Eccleſiaſtical Tradition particularly conſidered.*

And with this regard his higheſt Sayings for Tradition are undoubtedly true: as that the Church uſes Forms and Rites delivered down from their Fathers, and no where to be read in Scripture; that they are of great importance to Devotion; and that, if the Church were deny'd the uſe of any thing that is Unſcriptural, ſhe would be left naked and almoſt mute. In ſuch a reſpect St. *Baſil*'s Sayings are exact, and this was enough for his purpoſe. But to make him ſay, that there were any neceſſary Truths conſign'd to Tradition, different from thoſe of the Scripture; or that any of the particular Ordinances he mentions, were determinately neceſſary; is to make him ſpeak more than he himſelf aſſerts. And further, to underſtand him, as if he poſitively affirmed all thoſe things to be of Apoſtolical Inſtitution; is to deal too rigorouſly with an Eloquent man, and not to give his Style thoſe favourable allowances that are uſual in his Caſe.

The General expreſſions with which he begins, are beſt to be interpreted by the inſtances he gives. And therefore when we find him reckoning the Creed for Unſcriptural, we are no longer at a loſs for his meaning concerning Doctrinals Unſcriptural, but know that in his account all Declarations and Confeſſions of Scriptural Faiths, are however Unſcriptural, if they have not been writ by the Apoſtles juſt in that very form. And in this ſence it is he truly affirms, that the Declaration or Preaching of Goſpel Truths would be too much ſtraitned, and brought almoſt to nothing, if confin'd to Goſpel Text, and not allowed the liberty of proper and larger Explications.

In like manner it is apparent, that St. *Baſil* could not intend thoſe particular Forms of Belief or Prayer, or thoſe Particular Rites, to be ſo neceſſary, as that they muſt never be vary'd or enlarg'd, or ſome of them totally laid aſide. The Church of his Age, did not underſtand it ſelf to be under ſuch a Confinement, for even the Creed that is called Apoſtolical, was then variouſly conceived in ſeveral Churches, and admitted beſides great enlargements

Chap. 6. *The certainty of Ecclesiastical Tradition particularly considered.*

in the Council of *Nice*. The Forms too of Prayers were very different: not to mention the other Rites. And as to these few usages which happen'd to be observ'd more generally; their perpetual necessity was never, I suppose, believed then by any wise man; and has since been sufficiently disown'd by the practice of the *Roman* Church.

St. *Basil* seems indeed to speak for the Apostolick Antiquity of those things something plainly: but to name no more now, the Differences we before observ'd of the Creed it self so nam'd peculiarly, do not agree with the conceit, as old as our Author, that it was Compos'd by the Apostles in common. It is very well known how easie the Churches of his time were in giving that Venerable Title to every respected Usage; and how easily Usages were then multiply'd. Of this St. *Basil* gives unawares an instance in this very Book: where, drawing an Argument from the practice of the Church of *Neocæsaria*, founded by *Gregory Thaumaturgus*, he commends that Church much to the disadvantage of the rest, and tells us, That she was so punctual to the Customs of her first institution, that she seem'd to others to be very defective.

πολλὰ τῶν παρ' αὐτοῖς τελουμένων ἐλλιπῶς ἔχειν δοκεῖ, διὰ τὸ τῆς καταστάσεως ἀρχαιότροπον. c. 29.

Γρηγόριον τὸν μέγαν πῶ θήσωμεν; ἀρ' οὐχὶ μετὰ τῶν Ἀποστόλων καὶ Προφητῶν; Ibid.

Then, in St. *Basil*'s days the Antiquity of two hundred years, and the practise of such an eminent Apostolick Person as that *Gregory*, were sufficient to procure to any Rite the name of Apostolical: much less was it refus'd to such as were esteem'd Old, even before that Old Bishop's time; especially if they had the chance to be somewhat universally receiv'd. And therefore it is no wonder, if St. *Basil* follow'd the Phrase of his time, and was content to speak not very exactly, in a stile that would favour his Argument, and be admitted by his Adversary. Neither could any one have been much mis-led by this modern way of Expression, that had observ'd how cautiously the more Ancient Doctors had abstain'd from it, when the Argument equally requir'd it. But however, St. *Basil* seems here in this very place to have recollected himself, and

to

to Interpret his meaning; when, upon the Resumption, he mentions not the Apostles only, but adds other Authors for his Traditions: *The Apostles*, says he, *and Fathers, who first ordered the Churches.*

Chap. 6. *The certainty of Ecclesiastical Tradition particularly considered.*

He speaks too according to the singular practice of his latter times, when he makes such a secret of these Rites: and then he supposes them not written, that they might lie conceal'd; as if the Apostles could not have ordered a Writing to be kept secret. Whereas I suppose the true reason, why the Apostles wrote not down such kind of things, was not to keep them either private, or venerable; but because they were not worth the writing; as not being design'd for perpetual memory and use, but left to the discretion of each Age that was to follow.

When those Ceremonies were made so venerable, by their secrecy, and by the names of their Authors; it was as fit to find out some profound reasons for them, as it was agreeable to the Allegorical humour of some Great men, particularly of those who followed the *Alexandrian* way. And these Mysterious ones, St. *Basil* here gives us, have indeed that qualification he supposes, and *are not very obvious.* For *so few knew his true reason for turning to the East*, that the Author of the Orthodox Answers, subjoyned usually to *Justin Martyr*, was utterly ignorant of it. That too for standing at Prayers on *Sundays*, &c. is very Mystical. But had our Author been acquainted with the *Jewish* Rituals, he would never have went so deep for the Rationale of an ordinary practice: much less, if he had known their Language, would he ever have founded it upon the *Septuagints* bad Greek. For our part we need desire no more, than that the Customs, and their Reasons should go together; and the one not be admitted for Apostolical, without the other.

What is said upon this place of St. *Basil*, I desire may be understood with all due respect to his just Authority; whose Testimony in weightier Matters, or such as were under his own knowledge, I should be unwilling to decline. But it is not, I presume, any imputation upon his Integrity or Capacity, to say that he lay under the common

Chap. 6. *The certainty of Ecclesiastical Tradition particularly considered.*

mon prejudice or ignorance of a distant Age; and that he spoke concerning slighter things, and such as were not in question before him, according to the fashion of his time, and as he was carried away by the stream of his flowing Eloquence.

These Remarks, we have made, as we have been oblig'd by truth, and for the more abundant satisfaction of our Adversaries; not that they are much necessary to our present Intention. For upon this Testimony of St. *Basil* we needed not to have made any other observation than this: that he was willing enough, as appears by the Preface, to have advanc'd the Honour and Truth of Tradition, and that the Argument of his Book led him to instance in Doctrines; but that he was forc'd to descend very low for his Examples, having nothing to reckon but a few indifferent mutable Usages, whose meanness he endeavours to cover with mysterious reasons, never certainly intended at their Introduction.

Neither is it necessary to proceed any further, and to examine the remaining authority for Tradition, that is usually brought out of *Epiphanius*, a something later, and a much less exact Writer than St. *Basil*. His Sayings are much the same, and there need no other Reflections upon them, than those we have already made.

The Assertion which led us to the discussion of these Testimonies, the Reader may remember was this: That our Reasonings concerning Oral Tradition were confirmed by Fact; and that actually the Use and Authority of it in the Church lessened very much in a little time, and as soon as the Code of the Scriptures was Collected. Now this Assertion is so far from being impeach'd by these Authorities, that it is absolutely verified by them, and wants no further confirmation: it manifestly appearing thence, that in those days Tradition had nothing to tell, but a Story of some ancient Modes and Practices; and that she could not pretend to remember then any one Unscriptural Article of Faith; however it has happen'd since, that she has been made to rub up her memory, and been suborn'd by after Ages to depose to the truth of Precepts, and Doctrines

Doctrines, of which 1400 years ago she knew not a Syllable.

Chap. 6
*The certainty of Ecclesiastical Tradition particularly considered.*

My Lord *Bacon*, considering that few things of value were convey'd to us from Antiquity, aptly compares Time to a River, in which lighter things swim down, but the weightier are drown'd. We may too, with St. *Cyprian*, suppose Oral Tradition to be the River, and to descend down through some Tract of Time or Place. This then, if it will preserve it self pure and unmixt, must be content to run like one of those *Eastern* Brooks, which, receiving no accession, diminish as they pass; subdivided still into lesser Branches, and wasted continually, if only by the drowth of the Air, and the leakiness of the Channel, till at length they are entirely lost. But the ordinary Course of Tradition is (we see) like that of a common River; many a stream falls into it by the way from either hand, and it comes down to the lower grounds a wide and a mighty Current, bearing all along the old name: but no one thinks it was as great at its Head; or knows where to find below a drop of the first Water.

This uncertainty of Traditional Evidence in gross, has been the design'd Subject of the present Chapter. For, as we have not insisted on the probable Objections we had to make against the Divine Right of the above-mention'd Rituals; so we do not stand neither upon that advantage our Adversaries Testimonies have incidentally given us, in favour of the Sixth Article of our Church, which admits no Doctrine to be of Faith that is not contain'd in the holy Scripture. We do not therefore pretend here, to set aside all Unscriptural Articles at once; we are only preparing to examine them hereafter, as they shall be offered singly: having only endeavour'd now to bring Oral Tradition within some compass, and to prescribe it some certain limits and conditions, to which it ought to submit. And in order to such particular Enquiries, I have deduc'd the general intent of this long Discourse into the following Corollaries.

CHAP.

Chap. 7. *Articles concerning Traditional Authorities.*

## CHAP. VII.

### *Articles to be observed concerning Traditional Authorities.*

I. IF any Apostolical Sayings of Moment had been Orally delivered down, it would have been convenient that they should not have pass'd many descents, and that at the second or third hand they should have been compared and attested by some unconcerted concurring Tradition, and then have been reduc'd into Writing by good and credible hands, and that Writing received for true by some considerable part of the Catholick Church.

The wisdom of our Law has thought fit to use a nicer Caution in matters of far less importance. In the Nuncupative disposal of any Sum above 30 *l.* it requires three Witnesses deposing to the words of the Testator, or their effect; and that they should not be accidental Hearers, but call'd on to that purpose: it trusts not neither their Memories at the distance of half a year; but is so scrupulous, as to require that what-ever Evidence they bring in after that time, should have been written down, not only before the half year was expired, but within six days after the words were first spoke. Of the necessity of some such exactness that Author seems to have been sensible, who first put out in writing the Donation of *Constantine*, and amongst the Letters of the first Popes, that Nuncupative Testament of St. *Peter* under St. *Clemens* his hand. But that way ought to have been thought of earlier, and then it might have deserved a greater credit. For tho' it found so much with the Popes as to be made Law, and has been defended for good Tradition, even in this Age: yet a Deed never produced till 400 year after the Maker's death, was shrewdly to be suspected of Forgery; and a Nuncupative Testament not all proved in Seven

Seven hundred years, was manifestly barr'd by the reason of that *Statute against Frauds and Perjury*.

Chap. 7. *Articles concering Traditional Authorities.*

II. However the Sayings of our Saviour and his Apostles might have been delivered down Orally in Barbarous Countries; yet no doubt, had there been any Traditions considerable, and different from what were written by the Apostles, known for authentick in the *Roman* World, especially to the end of the second, the third, or fourth Ages; they would not have wanted some one that should have recorded and fixed them in writing, *in perpetuam rei Memoriam*, amongst those many Zealous, Inquisitive, and Learned men that flourish'd in those times.

This was to have been expected from them, out of ease to their own memory, and out of a pious care for Posterity. Something of this kind was too attempted by some of them: but the success of their labour shew'd, how little need there was thought to be of it; and that the holy Spirit had already written all the necessary Doctrines he design'd to be transmitted. For, besides the Heretick Gospels and Revelations, besides the spurious Recognitions of *Clemens*, and the Apostolical Constitutions and Canons known to be supositious; there were Traditional Collections made by *Papias*, whom we have mention'd, and by *Hegesippus*; there were Doctrinal Memoirs, going under several venerable names; there were too the Apostolical Constitutions alledged by *Epiphanius*: all which have been neglected and lost, either for their insignificancy, or uncertainty; their Spots and Faults having been discover'd, or their lesser light obscur'd quite and extinguish'd, by the Scripture our great Luminary.

Διδαχὰι. Διδασκαλίαι.

III. But further, suppose the men of those Ages so much wanting to themselves and us, upon I know not what by respects; yet however we cannot think them so careless in their Argument, and so forgetful of what they knew, (if any such considerable Sayings they did know) as not to bring them out on proper and exigent occasions. No more than now for a whole Age together, *Hoc est Corpus* has been omitted for Transubstantiation; or *Tu es Petrus*, for the Pope's Supremacy.

Chap. 7. *Articles concerning Traditional Authorities.*

IV. And for the ſame Reaſon, it cannot be demanded that any Traditive interpretation of holy Scripture ſhould be allow'd for Authentick now by us, which the Holy Fathers of thoſe Ages, commenting upon the Scripture profeſſedly, either knew not, or elſe paſſed by. To ſay there were ſuch Traditions, unknown to ſuch men, is to bring the Authority of thoſe Traditions too much in queſtion: for to whom, or by whom elſe ſhould they be tranſmitted? and to think that an Authentick interpretation, as Divine as the Text it ſelf, ſhould be omitted by the Commentator who knew it; and that he would, inſtead of that Sacred one, ſubſtitute one of his own, is unreaſonably abſurd.

V. But further yet, ſo much we muſt take leave to demand, that whatever Traditive Interpretation ſhall be brought to controul the Text, and wreſt it from its own natural obvious ſence; much more that ſhall impoſe upon the Text a ſence ſeemingly abſurd to Humane Apprehenſion, and introductive of new Duties, otherwiſe unlawful; that then ſuch a Traditional interpretation ſhould be as Authentick, and as well atteſted as the Text it ſelf.

VI. And laſtly; to return to our proper Argument in hand, this too we muſt of right expect; that no place of the written word of God, ſhould be more expreſs, or more Authentick; than that of the unwritten word, which is to ſet up and authoriſe an Infallible Interpreter of all that Scripture, and an infallible propounder of all Articles of Faith.

In this view of Oral Tradition, we have ſeen, firſt in the general, how little of it we are to expect to meet, and how uncertain its evidence muſt be; and then, if any particular of it be urged, upon what terms it muſt be admitted. And now ſo prepared, we may proceed to examine the pretences of the *Roman* Church. The firſt and grand one is their Infallibility, which therefore we are to conſider in the next place.

DISCOURSE

# DISCOURSE II.

## *Concerning Infallibility, &c.*

### The Contents.

Chap.

*THE Hypotheſis of Infallibility explained according to its pretence.* I.

*The Nature of the Proof that is to be required for this pretended Infallibility.* II.

*The Authorities or Poſitive Proofs for it conſidered.*

*The Proofs alledged from Scripture inſufficient.* III.

*The Proofs from Tradition inſufficient,*

*For an Infallibility at large.* IV.

*For the Infallibility of the Pope.* V.

*For the Infallibility of the Majority of the Church Univerſal.* VI.

*For the Infallibility of a Council.* VII.

*For the Infallibility of Pope and Council together.* VIII.

*The Indirect Arguments pretended to be drawn from Reason, and to conclude* ad Absurdum, *considered. As,*

- *That otherwise God has not sufficiently provided for his Church.* IX.
- *That without Infallibility there can be no certainty of Faith.* X.
- *That without Infallibility there can be no Authority in the Church.* XI.
- *That without Infallibility the Church may fail. Upon this Occasion there follows* XII.

*A Digression in two Enquiries.*

1. *Whether the whole Church may possibly Err.* XIII.
2. *Whether Salvation may be obtain'd in an Erring Church.* XIV.

*The Conclusion. That no Modern Ecclesiastical Body is by any antecedent Grant made incapable of Error; that their Judgment may be sometimes justly suspected; and that it must be discern'd by their consequent Decrees, whether actually they have Erred or no.* XV.

DIS-

# DISCOURSE II.

## *Concerning Infallibility, &c.*

### CHAP. I.

### *The Hypotheſis of Infallibility explain'd according to the uſual Pretence.*

INfallibility, is a word of very eaſie meaning, and needs not any extraordinary Proponent for its definition; it being nothing elſe but an impoſſibility of erring, or being in the wrong: which as it is an Eternal Attribute of God, whoſe Dictates are neceſſarily true; ſo is pretended by his Gift, at ſome times, and in ſome Caſes to belong to Men.

But as plain and ſimple as it is in its firſt notion, when it comes to be applied to men, it grows more incumbred, and includes ſeveral reſpects; as (1) the Perſons to whom it appertains, (2) the Caſes in which it takes place, (3) how and in what manner it is wrought and works.

1. The Conſideration of the Perſons alone includes great variety. For tho' it be allow'd by Pretenders on all ſides, that this high Priviledge belongs to none but Chriſtians; yet whether it be appropriated to a ſingle Perſon, as the Pope; or whether it reſults from the conſent of a Body, and what that Body is: or whether, laſtly, it be not tied to the

Chap. 1. *The Hipothesis of Infallibility explained.*

the united concurrence of that Body of Men, and of the Pope together; these all are questions made to our hand, and which we ought not to overlook.

For the claim may be put in, in the name of the present Universal Church; and that be Truth in which all Christians, all the Clergy, or all the Bishops now living shall Unanimously agree; or else it may be said that Truth shall go along with the consent of the greatest part.

Now if the Consent of the greatest number be Infallible, it may be then suppos'd, that such as have been voted out by Majority of Voices heretofore, have no share in this Priviledge now; and that Hereticks therefore, tho' greater in number at present, yet are not to be taken into consideration: The Infallibility belonging only to that Body of Men, who are the Majority in remainder, after the several successive Exclusions.

And then further, it may all along be surmis'd that this Grace is so dispens'd, as not to belong either to the whole Body of the Christians, or to any particular Church, without the Concurrence of some certain Bishops, or Bishop, as that of the *Roman* See; presum'd therefore to be of the *Quorum* in that High Commission.

And then lastly, if any single See has that Prerogative; it may be thought to be Infallible of it self, and to want no other concurrence.

The Reader, it may be, that is in a zealous search after this Infallible Guide, thinks himself impertinently delayed by such an enumeration. He expected perchance that the Seat of that Authority should have been perspicuous, and visible; that the Decider of Controversies, should himself have been subject to none; and that it should immediately have been known, to whom resort was to be made: But he will be pleas'd to stay 'till the several pretences are laid open; both that he may not be mistaken in the Person of his Guide, and that he may know what assistance from him he is to expect.

First

First then, the common Interest has been so much considered by Great Men of the Roman Communion, that it has been sometimes question'd, whether this Inerrancy is not to be plac'd in the Collective Body of all Christians, Children only excepted. However it has not been thought extraordinary, to vest it in the Consent of the whole Clergy, or of the upper part, or at least of the Bishops; so that, that only should be necessarily true, in which all respectively should agree. By this means every Person, at least of the Superiour Rank, would be secure enough against the infallible Sentence: and a *Heretick* Bishop must be *self Condemn'd*, formally, and not without the concurrence of his own Vote. But this supposition, at the best, would end but few Controversies: and it is thought necessary for the Church to have a more practicable and ready Decision.

Chap. 1, &c. *Car.* Alliacen. apud *Richer.* vindic. Sch. *Paris.* Coloniæ. Lib. 3. pag. 16, &c. 42, 43, &c.

Let us then have no regard to those Popular *Sorbonnists*; and let us too set aside the Decree of their whole Theological Faculty, exclude the *Domini Curati* from the Hierarchy, and deny them the Decisive voice allow'd them, particularly by *Gerson*. Let us suppose that this Infallibility rests only in the Episcopal Colledge; and let us grant further, that the Consent of the whole may be taken from the greater part; yet still there are many Points remaining to be settled. As, what shall the odds of number be on that side, on which Infallibility must go? Is it a simple Majority, as in ordinary Assemblies? or will not the Holy Ghost come down but upon two Thirds, as in the Election of a Pope? And besides, are the Voices of those Bishops suppos'd to be taken at home? or are they not Infallible till conven'd and met together? if they are met together, will the present, tho' a Minor part, include the absent? if so, what Power is to Summon them, and make their absence contumacious? or can the absent make Proxies, and is the share in this Priviledge such as may be delegated? or lastly all along is every Bishop to have an equal Voice? or shall they not be considered according to the largeness of their *Dioceſs*, and in proportion to the number they represent? has every Petty *Italian* Bishop with his small Care, or a Titular Bishop with

Faculc. Theol. *Paris.* apud *Richer.* lib. 1. pag. 3. De Potest. Eccles. apud eund. *Richer.* lib. 3. pag. 144.

Chap. 1. *The Hipotheſis of Infallibility explained.*

with none, the ſame ſhare of Infallibility with the real and greater Dioceſans? A thing not allowed by the Councils of *Conſtance* and *Baſil*, tho' neceſſary to the Council of *Trent*. Concerning theſe Circumſtances, we ought to have determinate ſatisfaction, and expreſs warrant. But beſides, we are to conſider, that Infallibility this way will be very difficultly, and very uncertainly attain'd. The Poll of the Chriſtian World is numerous, and cannot be exactly taken as the Epiſcopal Votes lye diſpers'd: and if they are to meet, the Controverſie concerning the freedom of the place, the notice given, *&c.* is ſo manifold, that it can never be a clear Caſe.

Upon which account, the Particular Church, that ſhall now pretend it ſelf to be Heir, as it were, to the Old Univerſal by Succeſſive Excluſions, can never be too ſure that thoſe ſeveral Excluſions were duly made; that the Poll was rightly taken, and all neceſſary formalities obſerv'd: for ſhe is to know, that upon ſo many contingent ſuppoſitions her claim of Infallibility depends.

Theſe Difficulties and Inconveniencies ariſe upon placing Infallibility in the general Body of Chriſtian Biſhops: and they ſtill encreaſe, if beſides the conſent of that Body, we ſuppoſe the Concurrence of any certain Biſhop, or Biſhops, preciſely neceſſary.

All the Great Biſhops put in heretofore a claim ſomewhat equal; though not of this kind. Thoſe of *Antioch*, *Alexandria*, and *Rome*, founded a preeminence partly upon Apoſtolical Succeſſion, partly upon the greatneſs of their Cities. *Conſtantinople* afterwards inſiſted upon the Priviledges of its City ſingly. The See of *Jeruſalem* had its pretence too, a weak one as the World went; for it was purely Spiritual, and in right of the firſt Church. Now great Reaſon there was, that in common Cauſes no innovation ſhould be made in the Chriſtian World, without the Advice of the ſeveral Patriarchs; becauſe they were ſuppos'd to ſpeak the ſence of their ſeveral Diſtricts, whom upon ſuch occaſions they conſulted, and in whoſe Name they pronounced. Accordingly all theſe Patriarchs were nigh equal heretofore, when Rank and Precedence were

were only thought on: but the Pope has since advanced such a singular pretence, and it is press'd upon us so much, that we need take no notice of the other, but only of the *Roman*.

Chap. 1. *The Hypothesis of Infallibility explained.*

Here then it may be considered, whether the Pope challenges his Power in this Infallibility, whether of a Negative Voice, or absolute Determination, in virtue of his See, the place of his residence, or in vertue of his Succession to St. *Peter*. It is fit that this should be known, in order to the discerning the Person whom we are to look after, and the Proofs that are to be produced.

If he presides in virtue of the place, we may enquire whether Infallibility will not be lost, if *Rome* be destroy'd, or become either *Heathen* or *Mahometan*? Whether the Gates of Hell are never to prevail against that City? or if they do, whether a Titular Bishop must be made, and the Stile be Bishop of *Rome*, *consumpta per Hostes*, or *in Patribus Infidelium*? Or lastly, we may ask, whether the Priviledge was good to a Pope errant, or to the Residentiaries of *Avignon*?

If he presides by virtue of the General Title of Successour to St. *Peter*, it then comes naturally to be enquired, by what grant the Cardinals, as the Clergy of *Rome*, chuse a general Officer for the whole World? and whether the Bishops of all *Christendom* ought not to joyn in his Election to make it valid? whether the Authority be particularly annext to *Rome*? or may not be translated to another place, at the pleasure of the Electors, and at least revert to *Antioch*?

If then the Pope be of the *Quorum*; all the uncertainty to which the Papacy it self is incident, from the forementioned Causes, or to which the Papal Person is obnoxious from Simony, or any other common Nullity of Election, must fall upon Infallibility. It will be but ill founded, when the See is full. But it must be in *Nubibus*, in a *Sede Vacante*, and as much in suspence, during a competition of *Antipopes*, of which there have been many; the last of above 50 years continuance. For in that Case, not a General Council of Bishops can resolve us certainly who is the right Pope; they being by themselves, and without

him, but fallible Judges in the present supposition.

Chap. 1. *The Hypothesis of Infallibility explained.*

Tho' therefore a Conjunction of the Pope and a Council compounds the Difference, and unites their several Titles; Tho' the Infallibility of them both together, seems to be the surer, yet it will be rarer too, and of much less service to the World. For either there will not be a right Council, or not a right Pope; or else a right Pope and right Council will very seldom agree.

Therefore lastly, those seem to have taken the more expedite Course, that make the Pope Infallible alone: for then Infallibility may be had with more certainty and ease than in the former Cases. For tho' many questions might arise concerning the true Pope, and though his residence at *Rome* would be at a very inconvenient distance for those of *China* and *America*; yet, when you are got thither, an Infallible answer you might have, if the Oracle would speak.

Now these Scruples are not imaginary, and of our own raising; but have been occasioned by eager Disputes among themselves. The Schism of *Antipopes* made the Western Church consider of these things. For when for a long while together this part of *Europe* had own'd one Infallible, and that another, to whom there was as length a third added; The Church then wearied and asham'd of the Scandal, assembled it self, and proceeded to the deprivation of all the Concurrents: upon that occasion, declaring its Power above that of a Pope, and determining even in Faith without one. Then too it was thought fit to vote by Nations of Bishops, and not by their persons; so that they were considered in their share of Infallibility, according to the number of their Flock. There they made Constitutions to be observed by the Popes; which were however regarded no more, than the solemn promises made in the Conclave to the Cardinals are used to be: for after that the Popes began quickly to reassume their old extravagance of Power, their absolute uncontroulable Authority was taught by their Benificiaries and Stipendiaries; and the Jesuits a new Order erected, whose greatest perfection was their blind Obedience to the *Roman* See, and whose great

Dante ad hoc ipsum vexationem præsentis Schismatis Intellectum. *Gerson.* opusc. laudat. *pag.* 128.

great endeavour it was, to recover Infallibility to the Pope, and bring all, if not into their Order, at least into the like subjection.

Now indeed the Jesuits (at least of *France*) seem to have dispensed with that solemn Vow; and the *French* have by late Declarations carried the Authority of Councils up to the heighth of *Constance*: but the rest of the Popish Communion are not agreed in that point. The *Spanish*, *Italian*, *German*, and *Polonian* Clergy stand off in the behalf of their Lord and Master; and were they all of a mind, yet we were never the surer, except the Pope would declare against himself too. But this we are not to expect; for tho' they have been content to joyn Head and Body against the Reformation, yet they have still kept their separate Pretences on foot. The Popes, even in the Council of *Trent*, resolving not to give up their Infallibility to the common Cause; and ordering it so at last, that the sanction of the Decrees might still be said to proceed from their single Authority.

That Council of *Trent*, if examined by our former Reflections, will have a very uncertain Authority; not to mention the Nullities that are alledged from other Reasons. For we see it is very justly questionable, whether the Pope has that Authority to call all the World together, that they are obliged to meet upon his assignation of time and place; so that if they are not there then, they shall be reputed either contumacious or consenting, and the Holy Ghost will proceed without them? whether those that are there, are to vote by Heads or by Proxies? whether the after consent of those that were away, is to be presum'd to concurr to the Infallibility, and their votes can be taken at home? By what Reason the *Greek* Church is excluded? By what General Council declared Schismatical and deprived of Suffrage? By what General Council the *Lutherans* were shut out for Hereticks? whether guilty for not believing Transubstantiation by the *Lateran*, a Council disown'd by some now of the *Roman* Communion? whether offending in the point of Images against the 2*d*. of *Nice*, a Synod heretofore rejected by the West? whether as Unbelievers

Chap. 1. *The Hypotheſis of Infallibility explained.*

in the Articles of Purgatory, &c. defined by the Schiſmatical Conventicle of *Ferrara* and *Florence*? Concerning theſe Particulars we may juſtly expect ſatisfaction, and that they ſhould let us know, by what Rules they have proceeded, and on what formal preciſe word from God their Authority is founded.

Such doubts may be raiſed on the Council of *Trent*, of all ſince the firſt four; (nay of them too had the *Romaniſts* a mind to quarrel.) And as our Adverſaries do not allow one Council to be Infallible becauſe not free, another becauſe not General, another becauſe not call'd, or becauſe not approv'd by the Pope: ſo need not we allow any of them all to have been Infallible; becauſe there has never yet been any, that has not been ſubject to ſome of theſe Queries and Uncertainties we have now ſuggeſted. For as to preciſe Infallibility, what certainty of it can we have, unleſs it be preciſely known, what thoſe requiſites are, which God has made peremptorily neceſſary to the production of ſuch an extraordinary thing?

The *Romaniſts* indeed, dextrous in finding their advantage, would raiſe one even from their own Differences concerning the Infallible Perſon; and becauſe Infallibility is ſtill ſuppos'd in the Diſpute, would impoſe therefore upon the World that the thing it ſelf is out of queſtion. But the contrary Concluſion will be made by all thinking Men: who will not be perſwaded that God gave a Commiſſion of Infallibility with a Blank for the Perſon; and that he would, in order to the ending of all differences among Chriſtians, have added a new one. It will not, I ſay, be thought that God would have left a doubtful uncertain direction, (terms almoſt inconſiſtent,) if he intended any; and that ſuch Texts, as cannot aſcertain the Perſon, ought to be conſtrued to the Authority.

For altho' our Modern *Romaniſts*, ſenſible of the diſadvantage they have ſuffered by their falling out among themſelves, have piec'd up the Quarrel, and accommodated Affairs; propoſing to us ſome few Councils, as that of *Trent* particularly, for unqueſtionably good by the Title, on both ſides, both Pope and Biſhops; yet this will not do, and they

they are wise too late. For as in the Case of Land or Franchises suppos'd held from the King, to which two Competitors make several Titles; they may go to Law so long, and prove against one another so well, till it be found that neither have any Title; and that the thing in Controversie belongs not to them: but is still in the Crown; so here it has happen'd, that both Parties have already expos'd the weakness of their common pretence too far; it appearing plainly from the former hearings, and mutual opposition, that the Evidence produc'd on either side is of no force, and that the Infallibility they contend for belongs only to God; the Prerogative that is said to be granted, being of so high, and withal of so peculiar a nature, that if it be not expresly mention'd and determinately assign'd, it can never be suppos'd to be convey'd. They may go therefore, and get a new Grant if they can, but as yet they have none.

II. But this Uncertainty concerning the Person of our Infallible Judge is not all; there are other very material Questions concerning the extent of his Jurisdiction.

In the first place, one would expect, that all commands of such a Person, or Body, should lay an indispensable Obligation upon Inferiours: for so it seems good to the Holy Ghost, and to them; and the Holy Ghost, we know, must be obey'd when commanding, as much as assented to when defining. Neither is it to be presum'd, that this Body knows not the limits of its own Power; or that it will transgress them. For if Infallibility be given to a Pope, and a Council for our direction, how shall they direct more properly than by Commands? and if even our Infallible Director may err out of its Sphere, and Command where it ought not; what an uncertain direction is this? and instead of being a help, what a Snare is it to the Consciences of Men? But so it is, for those who receive the Doctrines of the Council of *Trent*, think it not so much as a Venial Sin, to refuse some of its Precepts; and a very great and most Christian Country will not to this day submit to its Holy Decrees. By what just Authority they exempt themselves from obedience, and where in the word of

Chap. 1. *The Hypotheſis of Infallibility explained.*

of God they find this exception, we would willingly learn, for Reaſon would lead us to make none.

But however, although it be not in the Power of a Council, by their Precepts to make indifferent things Obligatory; yet ſtill ſhall not their Commands be ſuppos'd to be lawful? and can an Infallible Body ordain a thing to be done, which muſt not be done, and is againſt the will of God? For ſhall it be ſuppos'd, that they decree an Action, either knowing it to be unlawful? or not conſidering whether it be lawful or no? or did they think it lawful? for a Body of Biſhops, with a Pope in their Head, to decree an Action without conſidering its Legality, is an abſurd ſuppoſition; much more to imagine, that they decree it conſcious of the Illegality; (for why then may they not decree a falſe Doctrine, conſcious of its falſeneſs?) But if they judg'd it Legal, why are they not Infallible in that Judgment, as well as others? and why is not their Command as manifeſt a Declaration of that their Judgment, as any other way of Expreſſion? ſhall not therefore their Command preſume manifeſtly the Thing to be lawful? and a Command under pain of Excommunication, ſuppoſe it to be neceſſary? but here too the Infallible Judge is cut ſhort, and he ſhall never be ſuppos'd to be exempt from errour, but when he determines Affirmatively: for fear the Council of *Lyons*, when it depos'd an Emperour, and order'd his Subjects to Rebell, ſhould be as Infallible as any other that decreed Tranſubſtantiation. When therefore the Commiſſion for Infallibility is produced, you are to remember to look for this Clauſe of exception too.

Well, but then are they always Infallible when they expreſly and poſitively determine? are they ſo concerning the Truth of Matters of Fact? and will a Council of Biſhops impannel'd, be an Infallible Jury? The Jeſuits of *France* indeed, to ſerve an Occaſion, would have had the Pope not only Infallible, but Infallible in matter of Fact too: and then it was abſolutely to be believ'd on his word, that ſuch condemn'd Propoſitions were in *Janſenius*; tho' they themſelves would not undertake to turn to the Page, and ſhew the place. But they were over-ruled in this new

new point of Divinity; and it was laid down for Catholick Doctrine, that Modern Infallibility obtain'd in Matters of Doctrine only.

Chap. 1. *The Hypotheſis of Infallibility explain'd.*

But this Exception muſt not be taken too groſly, for the Church propoſes many matters of Fact, in the Creed, and in the Scriptures, to be believ'd. And beſides, every ſpeculative Article which the Church determines, is ſuppos'd always to have been taught *de facto* before, by Chriſt or his Apoſtles: and too, if a Council ſhall determine, that ſuch a Propoſition is found in the Bible; tho' they cite neither Chapter nor Verſe, and we cannot find it, muſt we not believe them? Infallibility therefore muſt take place in Antient Facts, recorded or done by the Apoſtles; and other Modern Facts only are to be excepted. This Exception has ſomething more of Reaſon in it than the other, and we may be tempted to like it the better, for the ſake of the Inconvenience our Adverſaries may find from it; (for ſo, they will never be able to determine Infallibly, concerning the Legality of any preceeding Council, or Papal Election:) however they will be pleaſed not to deal with us here, as the *Jeſuits* would have dealt with the *Janſeniſts*; but do us the favour hereafter to ſhew it, when they come to produce their Proofs.

Suppoſe we then that the Holy Ghoſt will aſſiſt the Church in no other Subject, but only concerning the mind of the Apoſtles, and in explanation of their words; yet, thus much is not ſaid without mincing and reſtriction. For ſome will not dare to ſay that the Church is Infallible in the Affirmation of any, but neceſſary Articles; that the Council of *Trent*, for Example, was not Infallible in its Doctrinal Chapters, but only in its Canons with Anathema: ſo that, as in ſome other Affairs we do not uſe to credit men, but upon their Oaths; we are not bound to believe the Church, except ſhe Curſes. This is indeed a cunning Reſtriction, it does not diminiſh the Power of the Church; for ſhe is to be Judge of what is neceſſary, and may therefore give her Anathema as ſhe pleaſes: But her other Doctrines, which ſhe puts on Tryal, if you are a good Catholick, you cannot refuſe; and yet ſhe is not oblig'd, if they

*Guid.* in Cont. Diſc. 3. S. 101.

Chap. 1. *The Hypotheſis of Infallibility explained.*

they grow inconvenient, to maintain them. This ſubtle, but ſtrange Clauſe of reſtriction, we deſire likewiſe to ſee, whether it be in the body of their pretended Charter.

Well then, are we at an end yet? Is a Declaration of the Supream Eccleſiaſtical Power, Pope and Council, made in form, and inforc'd with an Anathema, infallibly certain, and a ſure direction to the Conſcience? no, there are ſtill ſome excepted Caſes, relating to the Temporalty, in which, after all, it will be of no Force, however Authoritatively pronounc'd. *If*, ſays *Maimbourg* from the *Sorbonniſts*, *Some Councils ſince* Gregory *the Seventh have threatned Kings with Depoſition, and if one has actually depos'd an Emperour; yet this was not done by way of Deciſion. And if any Council had made a Deciſion in this Caſe, it would have went for nothing but an unjuſtifiable Enterpriſe*, &c. *For this will be Eternally true, which all Antiquity ſtill believ'd; that the Church, though it be Infallible, (that which the Pope never was in the Opinion of the ſame Antiquity,) yet never receiv'd the gift of Infallibility from its Divine Spouſe, but only for things purely Spiritual, and entirely ſeparate from the Temporalty, and the Kingdom of this World, with which Jeſus Chriſt, who ſaid,* my Kingdom is not of this World, *would never intermeddle.*

*Traité* Hiſtor. des Prerogat. de l'Egl. de *Rom.* Chap. 29.

The Church then is Infallible, that you are ſure of, but who this Church is, it is hard to tell; as after, to come to the ſpeech of this Church, is a very difficult thing. When too ſhe does ſpeak, ſhe is not to be hearken'd to, if ſhe ſpeaks in the Imperative Mood; and in the Indicative, ſhe is Infallible but in one ſort of Phraſe; and after all, ſhe is not to be believ'd neither, but in one kind of Affairs; in other Cauſes her Sentence is null, and ſhe no Judge: There lies a Prohibition againſt the whole Church, as well as againſt any other Judge Eccleſiaſtical, and her Excommunication may be alike diſcharged by the Municipal Laws. She ſays indeed that her Declaration ſeems good to Her, and to the Holy Ghoſt; but whether what ſeems good to the Church, does indeed ſeem good to the Holy Ghoſt, that muſt be determin'd finally, in *France* by the Parliament of *Paris*, and with us in the Exchequer Chamber or Upper Houſe. So that after all this pretence to Eccleſiaſtical

siastical Authority, those Temporal Bodies it seems, are indeed the supream Courts, and last Resort.

Chap. 1. *The Hypothesis of Infallibility explained.*

III. But lastly, let us suppose, that the Council do keep within their Bounds, and pronounce an Infallible Sentence: yet in what manner I pray was this Infallible Sentence produced? did it result from premises? was it concluded from Arguments? and was the Church assisted to find out proper Reasons, from whence the Definitive Judgment should be inferred? No, this is dangerous to say; for the Reasons alledged in Councils, are often Unconcluding, and their weakness apparent. It remains therefore that the Holy Ghost assists the Church in the Conclusion only, and comes in after the *Ergo*. Well: this indeed is the Authoritative way: but then, (not to ask whether the Premises were thought true or false,) to what purpose were they brought? why reasoning and debate, all that humane jangling, in which the Holy Ghost does not concurr? Why do they not propose the Question, and immediately proceed to *Placet*? to what intent are all the Doctors called in? or what need the Bishops should be better Theologues, than *Innocent* the 10*th*. or this 11*th*.? There is it seems as little need that the Bishops in a Council should understand the question, as that the People should understand their Prayers; and *Placet* may be said in the one Case, as *Amen* is said in the other. How indeed the unlearned People should say *Amen*, St. *Paul* makes a doubt; (for he neither suppos'd a Miracle, or that they should hear a strange Language so long, till they had their *Queues* by rote: but how the Unlearned Bishops should say *Placet*, is very easie to imagine. For a Miracle we must suppose; and there will be need of no greater to rebuke a Heresie, than serv'd heretofore to forbid the Madness of the Prophet.

This Hypothesis of theirs, however odly it may appear, yet salves all the *Phœnomena* of the Church admirably well. All the Ignorance, Artifice, and Passions, all the irregular Motions, that may have ever been observ'd in Conciliary proceedings; all these it accounts for consistently, and preserves Infallibility still. For whereas in other Affairs, want of understanding may render Men unqua-

Chap. 1. *The Hypotheſis of Infallibility explained.*

lified to paſs a Judgment; and Bribery, or Force, Fear, or Affection may make it juſtly ſuſpected; theſe in our Caſe can have no Influence, and will neither impeach nor diſparage the Reſolutions of our Aſſembly: The Concluſions will be true, though taken up upon falſe Reaſons; and the Reſolutions juſt and good, be the Motives and Inducements never ſo corrupt and ungodly. We Hereticks therefore are impenitent, when we talk of ſuch kind of Nullities; and thoſe of the Romaniſts, who have required freedom in a Council, underſtood not its nature: For what force can there be upon it, that the Holy Ghoſt cannot over-power.

The Roman Church does wiſely to the Concluſion: and to her own Children the Logick is good, by an *Enthymem* without either of the Premiſes. But, tho' Reaſon ſignifies nothing in a Council, yet out of a Council it is us'd to be conſidered. This Hypotheſis therefore of theirs they will be pleas'd to prove; and, on this occaſion at leaſt, bring ſuch Arguments as ſhall be found concluding.

Whoever has view'd with us the Differences and Difficulties concerning the Seat of Infallibility, its Subject Matter, and the manner in which it is to be produc'd, will be very much inclin'd to ſuſpect their pretence, if he goes no further: but now he is deſired to proceed to the main Queſtion, and examine the Arguments that are brought in its defence.

---

CHAP.

Chap. 2.
*What Proof for Infallibility is to be required.*

## CHAP. II.

### *The Nature of the Proof that is to be required for this Infallibility.*

TO Forego then all the Advantages, their Disputes among themselves, and their crude Assertions, may give us; let us suppose, that as yet there's no Hereticks in the World; that all the Bishops and all the Clergy are assembled about some new question; and let the Question be about the meaning of our Saviour's or his Apostles words, and in such a Subject as may challenge Infallibility; supposing all this; yet I take leave to say, it is not impossible but the Pope, and all the Patriarchs, and the Majority of the rest, may be mistaken in their Decision, and that the contrary Article may be true.

For so it is, All men appart are acknowledged fallible, and various ways obnoxious to Errour. They may pronounce wrong, for want of knowledge or consideration, out of Interest, and design, to abet others, to assert themselves. When too they are met together in an Assembly, tho' they have greater opportunities of Information from a Company, yet they are found too to be as often misled by it. They are often surpriz'd into Errour, by a conceived good Opinion of other men, by their Arts, their Rhetorick, their Confidence; often frighted, or tempted to the wrong side; voting either for favour and Affection, or suppos'd duty, as their Friend or Patron goes, or out of Emulation and Opposition, as they see their Adversary inclin'd: they are often unaccountably fermented in the Mass, and over-born and carried away from their Judgment by the Crowd.

For such Reasons these single fallible Men cannot be suppos'd to make up an Infallible Body: and it will not be absurd to say, that an Assembly of them may Err, *Nemine*

Chap. 2. *What Proof for Infallibility is to be required.*

*Contradicente*; much leſs is it impoſſible, that a Major part of them ſhould vote wrong.

Now as Men, not yet Chriſtians, are fallible Creatures; ſo the grace in Baptiſm renders them no more infallible than they were before. After too they have receiv'd their new Character in Orders, it is no benefit of their Clergy to be exempt from the ſame humane frailties; and every ordinary Prieſt or Biſhop aſunder remains the ſame fallible man: it is neither impoſſible that he ſhould be deceived himſelf, nor that he ſhould endeavour to deceive another, ev'n in matters of Religion, and Articles of Faith.

By what Change then is it, that the majority of theſe fallible Chriſtians, or Eccleſiaſticks, or Biſhops, are more infallible, than the Majorities of other fallible men? it muſt be by ſome ſupernatural Power, and from ſome extraordinary gift of God. We muſt ſuppoſe that God at that time ſhall not only enlighten their Underſtanding, ſo as to be able to perceive the Truth, and pronounce it with certainty; but alſo that he ſhall ſo controul their wills, that they ſhall not be moved by Fear or Favour, Intereſt or Dependance, to overlook that Truth, and paſs a contrary Vote. That is, they muſt be, not only infallible; but, to that purpoſe, impeccable: and it muſt be impoſſible for them, in the giving of that ſuffrage, to deceive, as well as to be deceived.

This is the Miracle that muſt be preſum'd to make good ſuch a Pretence. Neither muſt our Adverſaries think to perſwade us, that ſuch an aſcertain'd fix'd Influence of the Holy Ghoſt, is ever the leſs miraculous and extraordinary; becauſe there are other ſupernatural influences, which we acknowledge to proceed hourly from his good and free pleaſure.

The Holy Ghoſt has determin'd its aſſiſtance to certain circumſtances of time and place, in the Sacraments only: there too the Operative Grace that is given, works not irreſiſtably, but concurrently with the will of the Perſon, and as he joyns to promote or hinder the Action. Nay in the Sacrament (as they call it) of Orders it ſelf, a Character

Chap. 2. *What Proof for Infallibility is to be required.*

Character indeed is conceiv'd to be impreſs'd on the Ordain'd, like a mark upon his Body, by force of the Holy Ceremonies; whereby he is diſtinguiſh'd from the Lay: but no more knowledge or honeſty given, than the Party himſelf ſhall pleaſe to retain, or endeavour to acquire. So the Holy Spirit acts in the very Sacraments themſelves; but out of them it blows as it liſts, and diſpenſes it ſelf not in certain places and times, by certain meaſures, but according to its ſecret pleaſure: ſo that no man from the ſincerity of his Prayers, or from any promiſe, can ſecure himſelf ſuch a Determinate degree of Aſſiſtance; much leſs can he be ſecure, that it is vouchſafed another, at ſuch a peremptory minute, and on ſuch an occaſion. And conſequently, if all the Chriſtians of the World ſhould meet together, and pray that the Holy Ghoſt would conferr ſuch an extraordinary Grace on ſuch a Perſon, at ſuch a time; they might hope it would be done, if they referr'd it to the good pleaſure of God: but they could not peremptorily challenge it, without a preſumption, that would forfeit even the favonr they might otherwiſe expect.

If then any Church had made a Sacrament of Conciliary Actions; they had made us a verv extraordinary Sacrament, that ſhould have conferr'd the Graces of Knowledge and Truth, and been liable to no impediment from the pravity of the Perſons: but to ſuppoſe no Sacrament, and yet to preſume upon ſuch an extraordinary Gift; muſt be to ſuppoſe a ſtrange Miracle of Grace, ſomething that ſurpaſſes the ordinary Methods or Laws, which the Holy Spirit obſerves even upon extraordinary occaſions.

For there are ordinary Laws, which the Holy Ghoſt ha preſcrib'd to himſelf in the ſecond Creation, as we allow others in the firſt. The Divine Power may go beyond them, when it thinks fit: but when it does, the Action is extraordinary and miraculous; and not to be ſuppos'd done without good Proof, nor to be expected afterwards without ſufficient Authority. For ev'n in the ſupernatural works of God, as in the infuſion of Humane Souls, tho' God can give the rectitude of the firſt Soul, and a ſtability ſuch

Chap. 2. *What Proof for Infallibility is to be required.*

ſuch as Angels have: yet he always continues in that extraordinary Action, an ordinary Courſe; neither is the Conception of the Bleſſed Virgin *Mary* herſelf, ſuppos'd by any immaculate without a Miracle.

Now a Miracle, whether in the Corporeal or in the Spiritual World, tho' eaſie to be done by God, yet is not ſo eaſily to be imagin'd by us. We are to ſuppoſe, that he keeps his uſual methods, until we have notice to the contrary. A viſible Miracle when doing needs no other notice, and demonſtrates it ſelf: but it cannot be preſum'd for the future, without expreſs warrant; otherwiſe to expect it, is to tempt God. An Inviſible miracle therefore, for the ſame reaſon, is neither to be believed for the paſt or preſent, nor expected for the future, without the ſame expreſs Authority. Ev'n in ſpeculation to allow it done, is unwarrantable credulity; and to wait for it, is Temerity and Preſumption.

ſuch Inviſible Miracles the Church of *Rome* thinks ſhe may ſuppoſe at pleaſure; and that Gods Omnipotence is always at her ſervice: where ſhe thinks ſhe cannot be diſproved, ſhe ſecurely aſſerts; never conſidering that the ſimple belief of ſuch things requires ſome good Evidence; and that they cannot be impos'd as neceſſary Articles of Faith, but upon ſuch Evidence as carries along with it neceſſary Conviction.

Were there therefore no conſequence to be heeded upon the Admiſſion of the Churches Infallibility, were it a ſingle ſpeculation; as it would be highly preſumptuous in the governing part of the Church, to depend upon ſuch an extraordinary Grace, without extraordinary warrant; ſo to inforce the reſt to believe it, without ſuch due warrant, would be abſolute Tyranny.

But if they intend to govern by this Maxime, and make it the foundation of an uncontrolable Authority, demanding upon this ſuppoſition, an abſolute aſſent to what-ever elſe they ſhall ſay: it is plain that then we have greater reaſon to be more rigorous in our Demand; and that our Aſſent cannot be required from us, but upon full Evidence, and ſuch to which we cannot but ſubmit; it being but fit that

that they ſhould give us ſome very good reaſon for this Propoſition, who upon our admitting it, are afterwards diſcharged for ever from giving us any reaſon more.

Chap. 2. *What Proof for Infallibility is to be required.*

So much difficulty we ſhould make of granting this Infallible Authority in General; had we no notice at what it aim'd, and to what purpoſe it would be uſed.

But further, the Proof for this pretence, as great as it ſhould be, however ought if poſſible to be greater yet; if this Propoſition comes actually loaded with others, that want very great proof themſelves, and cannot be maintain'd but upon this fond. For then it is not a ſimple Miracle we are perſwaded to believe; nor a miracle which may poſſibly engage our belief a little further; but ſuch a one, as has actually undertaken the maintenance of many more miracles, ſome of them more ſtrange than it ſelf, and ſcarcely reconcileable to humane underſtanding; that for example, of Tranſubſtantiation, as wondrous and as much above ordinary miracles, as any other miracle is above the effects of Nature.

But further yet, whereas if theſe unlikelyhoods and miracles, appendant on Infallibility, were purely ſpeculative, and reſted in the Brain; yet, if we had not an Evidence proportionably extraordinary, we could not without violence to our underſtanding give aſſent to their truth, nor without breach of honeſty profeſs it: ſo by greater reaſon, if they are not ſpeculative only, but paſs on to practice; and oblige us to Actions, at the firſt ſight unlawful, and no otherwiſe juſtifiable but by this pretence, of Infallibility; it is apparent then, that we are much leſs at our liberty, to give up our ſelves to its hazardous obedience; but are bound in our duty to God, and care of our Souls, to examine it with the utmoſt ſeverity.

When therefore I am to preſcribe the Proof, I might well demand ſuch a one, that ſhall be able enough to ſuſtain all the Definitions of the Council of *Trent*. For, it being manifeſt that the Laity depend upon this Principle for their aſſurance in all their Belief; and that the Learned leave, upon all occaſions, their want of proper Arguments to be ſupply'd by this Common Theoreme: it follows, that this

Chap. 2. *What Proof for Infallibility is to be required.*

this Article, ſo fundamental, muſt have ſome very extraordinary ſupport it ſelf; not only ſufficient to bear its own ſingle weight, but all that vaſt additional load that reſts upon it.

As for Example, whether theſe are Articles of Faith, and neceſſary to Salvation; *That the Sacraments, truly and properly ſo called, are Seven* [1]: *That in the Conferring them, the intention of the Miniſter is neceſſary* [2]: *That in the Church of* Rome, *who is the Mother and Miſtreſs of all Churches, the Doctrine concerning the Sacrament of Baptiſm is true* [3]: *That the Body and Blood of Chriſt, with his Soul and Body, are really and ſubſtantially in the Sacrament of the Euchariſt* [4]: *the ſubſtance of Bread and Wine not remaining, but converted* [5]: *and this not only during the Sacramental uſe, but before and after* [6]; *That Chriſt in that Sacrament is to be worſhip'd with external Soveraign Worſhip, and to be carried about for that purpoſe* [7]: *That Auricular Confeſſion was always uſed in the Church, and is neceſſary by Divine Command* [8]; *to the remiſſion of Sins* [9]: *That all Chriſtians are not obliged by Gods Command to receive the Sacrament of the Euchariſt in both kinds* [10]: *That the practice of the Romaniſts in that Caſe is juſt and reaſonable* [11]: *That in the Maſs there is a true and proper Sacrifice offer'd* [12]: *That it is to be offer'd not only for the Living but for the Dead, in Purgatory* [13]: *That the Prieſt may, and does well, to Communicate (as they call it) alone* [14]: *That Matrimonial Cauſes belong to Eccleſiaſtical Judges* [15]: &c. whether, I ſay, theſe Articles are ſo neceſſary, that neither theſe can be deny'd, nor the Church of *Rome* left without the loſs of Salvation; are Propoſitions each of them highly queſtionable, and much eaſier to be aſſerted by the Church of *Rome*, than proved: the proper Demonſtration of all of them being ſo very defective, and of ſome, the very principal, ſo ſhort and lame; that ſome in part, and others nigh altogether, are left to ſubſiſt on this general Infallible Ground. So that the Arguments, borrow'd at other times from this common place, are here to be accounted for; and ſo much ſuper-abundant Evidence is to be brought in, as ſhall not only ſerve to out-weigh the particular improbabilities of this Point, but ſhall beſides make good

[1] Conc. *Trid.* Seſſ. 7. Canon. de Sacram. 1°.
[2] Ibid. Can. 2°.
[3] De Bapt. Can. 3°.
[4] Seſſ. 13. de Euchar. Can. 1.
[5] Can. 2°.
[6] Can. 4°.
[7] Can. 6°.
[8] Seſſ. 14. de Sacr. Penitent. Can. 6°.
[9] Can. 7°.
[10] Seſſ. 21. Can. 1°.
[11] Can. 2°.
[12] Seſſ. 22. Can. 1°.
[13] Can. 3°.
[14] Can. 8°. collat. cum cap. 6°.
[15] Seſſ. 24. Can. 12.

good all the other defects of Argument, under which the reſt of the *Roman* Doctrines labour.

Chap. 2. *What Proof for Infallibility is to be required.*

But we are ready to abate of this juſtifiable Rigour, and are content to require only ſuch Proof, as ſhall be neceſſary properly to this Article.

Now, to be as eaſie as we can, and not to inſiſt upon hard terms, thus much our Adverſaries muſt obſerve; that a miracle ſo ſtrange as this, of ſuch an influence on our whole Lives, and of ſo great conſequence in Religion, cannot be pretended but from the word of God; nor then preſum'd, much leſs neceſſarily collected, from equivocal large expreſſions, capable of an eaſier ſence; and that therefore we ſhall not think our ſelves bound to expect it, and rely upon it, except they bring us ſome Divine Saying, of certain Authority, and expreſs meaning, for our Warrant and Command.

Thus much it may have been fit to premiſe: but I am ſcarcely to be excus'd, for thinking any of them ſo weak as to need the following Premonition; that the Authority of the Church is now, for a while at leaſt, ſet aſide; and that as the Doctors of the *Sorbon* will not admit a Popes Definition, to prove the Popes Infallibility, no more are we to admit the ſame aſſertion, (were there any) from a Council and Pope, as a Deciſive Evidence on their own ſide. The Pope or a Council muſt in this point demonſtrate from Scripture or Tradition, the written, or unwritten word of God, and to that we are now going.

The Reader therefore who cannot but have heard much of this wonderful Authority, lodg'd ſomewhere in the Church; who may have been counſel'd to repair to that Oracle, and bid upon pain of Damnation to take the infallible direction of that Guide; may be pleas'd to reflect with himſelf, that his firſt thoughts muſt naturally have fancy'd ſome expreſs and frequent mention of ſuch a Power in the word of God; ſome plain deſignation of the Per-

Chap. 2. *What Proof for Infallibility is to be required.*

this Article, so fundamental, must have some very extraordinary support it self; not only sufficient to bear its own single weight, but all that vast additional load that rests upon it.

As for Example, whether these are Articles of Faith, and necessary to Salvation; *That the Sacraments, truly and properly so called, are Seven* [1]: *That in the Conferring them, the intention of the Minister is necessary* [2]: *That in the Church of* Rome, *who is the Mother and Mistress of all Churches, the Doctrine concerning the Sacrament of Baptism is true* [3]: *That the Body and Blood of Christ, with his Soul and Body, are really and substantially in the Sacrament of the Eucharist* [4]: *the substance of Bread and Wine not remaining, but converted* [5]: *and this not only during the Sacramental use, but before and after* [6]; *That Christ in that Sacrament is to be worship'd with external Soveraign Worship, and to be carried about for that purpose* [7]: *That Auricular Confession was always used in the Church, and is necessary by Divine Command* [8]; *to the remission of Sins* [9]: *That all Christians are not obliged by Gods Command to receive the Sacrament of the Eucharist in both kinds* [10]: *That the practice of the Romanists in that Case is just and reasonable* [11]: *That in the Mass there is a true and proper Sacrifice offer'd* [12]: *That it is to be offer'd not only for the Living but for the Dead, in Purgatory* [13]: *That the Priest may, and does well, to Communicate (as they call it) alone* [14]: *That Matrimonial Causes belong to Ecclesiastical Judges* [15]: &c. whether, I say, these Articles are so necessary, that neither these can be deny'd, nor the Church of *Rome* left without the loss of Salvation; are Propositions each of them highly questionable, and much easier to be asserted by the Church of *Rome*, than proved: the proper Demonstration of all of them being so very defective, and of some, the very principal, so short and lame; that some in part, and others nigh altogether, are left to subsist on this general Infallible Ground. So that the Arguments, borrow'd at other times from this common place, are here to be accounted for; and so much super-abundant Evidence is to be brought in, as shall not only serve to out-weigh the particular improbabilities of this Point, but shall besides make good

[1] Conc. *Trid.* Sess. 7. Canon. de Sacram. 1°.
[2] Ibid. Can. 2°.
[3] De Bapt. Can. 3°.
[4] Sess. 13. de Euchar. Can. 1.
[5] Can. 2°.
[6] Can. 4°.
[7] Can. 6°.
[8] Sess. 14. de Sacr. Penitent. Can. 6°.
[9] Can. 7°.
[10] Sess. 21. Can. 1°.
[11] Can. 2°.
[12] Sess. 22. Can. 1°.
[13] Can. 3°.
[14] Can. 8°. collat. cum cap. 6°.
[15] Sess. 24. Can. 12.

good all the other defects of Argument, under which the rest of the *Roman* Doctrines labour.

Chap. 2. *What Proof for Infallibility is to be required.*

But we are ready to abate of this justifiable Rigour, and are content to require only such Proof, as shall be necessary properly to this Article.

Now, to be as easie as we can, and not to insist upon hard terms, thus much our Adversaries must observe; that a miracle so strange as this, of such an influence on our whole Lives, and of so great consequence in Religion, cannot be pretended but from the word of God; nor then presum'd, much less necessarily collected, from equivocal large expressions, capable of an easier sence; and that therefore we shall not think our selves bound to expect it, and rely upon it, except they bring us some Divine Saying, of certain Authority, and express meaning, for our Warrant and Command.

Thus much it may have been fit to premise: but I am scarcely to be excus'd, for thinking any of them so weak as to need the following Premonition; that the Authority of the Church is now, for a while at least, set aside; and that as the Doctors of the *Sorbon* will not admit a Popes Definition, to prove the Popes Infallibility, no more are we to admit the same assertion, (were there any) from a Council and Pope, as a Decisive Evidence on their own side. The Pope or a Council must in this point demonstrate from Scripture or Tradition, the written, or unwritten word of God, and to that we are now going.

The Reader therefore who cannot but have heard much of this wonderful Authority, lodg'd somewhere in the Church; who may have been counsel'd to repair to that Oracle, and bid upon pain of Damnation to take the infallible direction of that Guide; may be pleas'd to reflect with himself, that his first thoughts must naturally have fancy'd some express and frequent mention of such a Power in the word of God; some plain designation of the Per-

Chap. 2. *What Proof for Infallibility is to be required.*

sons to whom it is committed, and a Peremptory Order to the Faithful to obey it for ever without scruple: and then from that Reflection, he may be pleased to go on with me, and see how much of this those Pretenders are able to shew; and what pitiful Allegations they bring in so wonderful and momentous a Case.

---

## CHAP. III.

*The Proofs for Infallibility brought from Scripture Insufficient. First, those for the pretended Infallibility of the* Jewish *Church considered,* (Sect. I.) *Then those concerning the Christian. Particularly the* 28*th. of St.* Mat. v. 19, 20. (Sect. II.) 14 John 16. 26. Ch. 16. v. 15. 15. Act. 28. 1 Joh. 5. 20. 1 Cor. 12. 7, 8. (Sect. III.) 18 Mat. 17, 18, 20. (Sect. IV.) 1 Tim. 3. 15. (Sect V.) 4 Eph. 11. 14. (Sect. VI.) *other scattered Texts seeming to presume it.* (VII.) *A Conclusion from the whole against it.* (VIII.)

THE Places of Scripture alledged for an Infallible Guide, relate either to the Old or the New Covenant. Those which are to prove such a standing Infallibility under the New, and which are the most proper to our Purpose, I shall take, as they are propos'd in *the Rational Account concerning the Guide in Controversie*; neither shall I alter the order, that I may not seem to abate any thing of their force: only I shall take leave to add, upon occasion, something of the Context; that the sence may better appear.

Disc. I. §. 7.

The rest of the *Romish* Champions do not fail, on this Subject,

Chap. 3. *The Proofs from Scripture insufficient.* Sect. 1.

Subject, to lead us on to the admittance of Infallibility in the Christian Church, by preparing a supposition that there was such an establishment in the *Jewish*. But this Rational Guide to their Great Guide, led us not this way: it may be, because he saw, that if the supposition were never so well proved, yet the Consequence might fairly be deny'd. For the Methods and Politie of the Christian and Mosaical Dispensations are so different, that no Argument can be drawn from the existence of such a standing Officer, or Power, under the one, to the same under the other. Whatever of that Law was not from the Law of Nature, all the rest of its constitutions Judicial and Ceremonial, were Temporary and Arbitrary, appropriate to that People and Season. And tho' some of its appointments looked forward, and presignify'd; yet those Types were set to be Earthly shadows of Heavenly Things, not to be Forms and Models of a future Administration here below: as the High Priest is known to have represented Christ, no Apostle or Bishop; and those Sacrifices then continually offer'd, That one Sacrifice once for ever offer'd for our Sins. As therefore the Ephod, Brest-Plate, and Bells, are no Pattern for Pontifical Garments now; so we are not to expect that their *Urim* and *Thummim* should be answered by any Modern Oracle; no more than any High Priest of our days will pretend to Propheſy, from that extraordinary Power which belonged to their Priests, even when their *Urim* and *Thummim* ceas'd; and which was not withheld, no not from *Caiphas* himself. *Old Things are pass'd, and all Things are become new.* All Commands of Positive Institution, and all Gifts of extraordinary Favour, given out by *Moses*, are vacated and expired; not to be pleaded now, except reviv'd by a new Sanction, or a new Promise, from our proper Law-giver. For this Reason, had our Guide offer'd any Proofs for his Cause relating to the Old Testament, we might have pass'd them over, and us'd our right to consider only his pertinent Arguments: but the Reader, who is to exercise much Patience during this whole Debate, will give me leave to entreat it here; that we may not seem to take an advantage of one Authors

Chap. 3. *The Proofs from Scripture insufficient.* Sect 1.

Omission; especially when he will be found to have made it, not thro' forgetfulness, but design; and to have done his Cause more service, by concealing this Evidence, than by his producing all the rest.

The Fundamental Proof for a standing Infallibility in the *Jewish* Government, is from the 17. *Deuter.* where, after the appointment of Judicatures in their several Cities, made in the 16*th.* Chap. and after the ennumeration of some Crimes of a very heinous and notorious nature; it is ordain'd in the 8*th* verse, that in all doubtful Cases the last resort should be, to the supream Tribunal sitting in that place, unto which they are commanded in that 16*th.* to repair thrice in the year, for the service of their God.

The words are these. *If there arise a matter too hard for thee in Judgment, between Blood and Blood, between Plea and Plea, between stroke and stroke, being matters of Controversie within thy Gates; then shalt thou arise, and get thee up into the place which the Lord thy God shall chuse; and thou shalt come to the Priests, the Levites, and to the Judges that shall be in those days, and enquire; and they shall shew thee the Sentence of Judgment. And thou shalt do according to the sentence which they of that Place (which the Lord shall chuse) shall shew thee, and thou shalt observe to do according to all that which they inform thee: according to the sentence of the Law which they shall teach thee, and according to the judgment which they shall tell thee, thou shalt do: thou shalt not decline from the sentence which they shall shew thee, to the right hand nor to the left And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the Priest that standeth there to Minister before the Lord thy God, or unto the Judge, ev'n that man shall dye,* &c. *Josephus* gives the sence of this place so. *And if those Judges know not how to determine, in some Cases which may be brought before them; (and such cases often happen among men:) Let them then transmit the Cause to the Holy City; and let the High Priest, and the Prophet, and the Senate meet together, and decree the Sentence.* As to the Persons of whom this Soveraign Court was compos'd, some would have the High Priest with his Brethren to be the Supream Moderators,

Moderators, in all Ecclesiastical Causes; and the Temporal Judge or Prince to decide unappealably in Civils. Others give the Senate or Sanhedrim, (a Body consisting not of the Tribe of *Levi* only, but of all the rest promiscuously) the Preeminence in all Causes, and over the High Priest himself: the constant receiv'd Opinion of the *Jewish* Doctours. And *Josephus*, we see, joyns all Titles together, and adds a Prophet, if there be any, besides. If now we are to regulate our Christian proceedings by this Rule; *Josephus* will assign the Authority to the Pope and a Council together: the *Rabbins* will give it with those of *Basil*, to a Council: and the first Opinion, to the Pope and his Consistory. But a Council will find little satisfaction hence: because Lay-men may pretend to an equal voice; and it must be assembled in the Holy City. The Advantage in truth lies fairer for the Pope: for he may well be the High Priest; and by St. *Peter*, the Successor of *Aaron*: the Cardinals may be the Priests, the *Levites*, and *Rome* the Place which the Lord our God has chosen. And then it follows plainly from the Text, that what-ever is commanded thence, we are to observe to do: and further, that he who fails to do it, is not only to be Excommunicated, but to be put to death for his presumption.

Now for our part, we shall leave this Controversie concerning the Persons to be debated by the *Jews*, and those Christians who are concern'd in the advantage of it. If too the Pope or a Council shall gain the Cause; if either of them, or both, can derive to themselves the Authority of the Text; we must then, we confess, grant them a Power of Life and Death over us; (a Power I know they will not lose by *non user*:) but as for this priviledge of Infallibility, we shall not yet be oblig'd to allow it.

For as the design of God, in ordering his People to meet for their Devotions in one place thrice every year, seems to have been, in part at least, to Cultivate the Brotherly Love, and continue the Unity of that Family of *Israel*: so the adjourning all the more weighty Causes to the same common place, seems intended to knit that Politick Combination faster and closer, and to prevent any such

Chap. 3. *The Proofs from Scripture inſufficient.* Sect. 1.

ſuch breach as happen'd afterwards by the Sin of *Jeroboam*. The laſt Sentence therefore of that Court was to be Final; and peremptorily obey'd under the higheſt Penalty; but it is to be ſuppos'd no more Infallible, than the Sentence of other laſt Reſorts, and humane Soveraign Judicatures are thought to be.

This, and no more, *Joſephus* expreſſes; and no more can be collected from *Moſes* his words, than that, what ſuch a High Court pronounced, ſhould be taken for Law; and that the Perſon who oppos'd its juriſdiction, ſhould be put to death, as oppoſing the Supream Authority, and Fundamental Eſtabliſhment of that Polity.

Here is then an Authority ſettled with Power of Life and Death; Uncontroulable, but not Infallible; ſuppos'd to judge in queſtions of doubt and difficulty, and then to determine righteouſly; but not created incapable, (ſuch is the nature of all humane Bodies) of determining wrong even in plainer Caſes, and of Decreeing ſuch a Sentence, as might poſſibly be more intollerable to the Righteous, than the Sentence of Death. This is the plain natural meaning of the place, agreeable to common ſence, and the known practice of all Governments.

Had therefore the *Jews* been willing to have rais'd a Miracle on this Text, as their Uſage at other times is; and had we wanted ſome groſs inſtance of Errour to prove upon them; yet we could not juſtly be obliged to prefer their wonderful ſtrange interpretation, before a more ordinary and more Familiar ſence. But here it ſo happens, that the *Jews* themſelves make no ſuch pretence; and that if they did, we Chriſtians are not only able, but bound to convict it of falſity. Their High Prieſt, the reſt of the Prieſts, the Sanhedrim, and the whole body of the People, (that there might be no queſtion of the Legality of the Court,) having committed the moſt execrable Errour, and by a moſt ſolemn Sentence condemned our Bleſſed Saviour for an Impoſtor.

Some I know of the Romaniſts, being indeed very hard preſs'd, flye to this ſubterfuge; that the Errour of the *Jews*, though a grievous one, was only an Errour of Fact. But

But were not Matters of Fact, by this very Ordinance, triable before that Court, as well as matters of Right, and alike determinable by final Sentence? where too will they lay this Matter of Fact? was it whether he ſaid, he was the Chriſt? or whether he was that Chriſt? that he ſaid he was the Chriſt, was true, and they err'd not in it: and the other Point, whether Jeſus was that Chriſt, was as much a matter of right, as whether the Perſon called *Tiberius* was then Emperour: And was too at that hour the ſame Article of Faith that it is now. This Solution therefore is juſtly rejected by Cardinal *Bellarmine*, who chuſes rather to give a leſs Competent one, than one ſo groſly abſurd. *That Court*, ſays he, *was Infallible 'till our Saviour's coming; but upon his appearance their Infallibility was withdrawn, as the Urim and Thummim had ceas'd for ſome time* before. This is as much as to ſay, where-ever you can prove they did err, there I will grant you in that particular caſe they might: an anſwer that amounts to this plain Confeſſion, that he had nothing to reply. For does the Text that conſtitutes this Authority make any ſuch reſerved Caſe? or has he any other juſt cauſe to ſurmiſe this pretended failure? That the *Jewiſh* Diſpenſation was to determine at laſt by the Chriſtian, there is no queſtion: But that this determination was not to be made till our Saviour's Death, is as certain too. Until that time the Moſaical Law did abide in the ſame ſtate; the High Prieſt continued to Propheſie to the laſt Paſſeover; and our Saviour himſelf, not long before, had re-inforc'd the Authority, what-ever it was, of thoſe that ſate in *Moſes* his Chair. As to the Oracle of the Breaſt-plate, it had indeed ceas'd, but long before our Saviour's time: above 200 years ſays *Joſephus*, as we read him; with the firſt Temple ſay the *Rabbins*. But then too That, when-ever it ceas'd, ceas'd ſenſibly; like the Sun, diſappearing as viſibly as it had appeared: whereas this inviſible Oracular vertue, except there was ſome ſupernatural notice given of its being taken away, muſt be ſuppos'd to be withdrawn from the former Owners, they knowing nothing of its abſence, and preſuming that they ſtill poſſeſs'd it. For as theſe Men could never have known

*Joſephus Archæol.* l. 3. c.

Chap 3. *The Proofs from Scripture inſufficient.* Sect. 1.

known they were Infallible, unleſs God had told them; ſo neither could they know when they ceas'd to be Infallible, unleſs inform'd by the ſame Author. Now if the Cardinal would have ſuch a ſupernatural notice here underſtood, he ſhould have told us whence he learnt it, for otherwiſe it is not to be preſum'd: and if there was no ſuch notice given, we are then to diſcharge the Elders and People of the *Jews*, from that accurſed Crime of which they have been ſo long accuſed. For the Elders, they gave ſentence under their old Confidence, and as far as they knew, aſſiſtance of Infallible direction. And as for the People, they in their blind obedience ſubſcrib'd to the ſentence of their Superiours; doing no more than what in the preſent ſuppoſition, they were order'd of old to do by *Moſes*, and but lately by our Saviour himſelf.

Had that High Court been then own'd for Infallible by the *Moſaical* inſtitution; it muſt have been a very difficult thing, if not impoſſible, to have converted any *Jew* to the Religion of Chriſt. For how ſhould they have admitted that Perſon to be Chriſt, who was Condemned by their Infallible Judicature for an Impious Blaſphemer? and how abſurd as well as impious muſt it have been in any, to have judged thoſe Judges, and to have pretended to know better than themſelves, whether they continued fallible or no? Was it not to be preſum'd, that in caſe of ſuch a failure, the Court ſhould have firſt known it from God; and the People, by the confeſſion and ſurrendry of the Court? we Chriſtians therefore do not conſider well, when to gain a preſent Infallibility, we give one againſt us; which tho' we raiſe at pleaſure, yet ſhould the *Jews* lay hold of it, we cannot at our pleaſure diſſolve.

But, God be thanked, the *Jews*, however willing they might be to accept of any Argument againſt us, and alſo to render the Conſtitution of their Fathers as Sacred as they can, have not yet taken this Courſe, nor arrogated to their celebrated *Sanhedrim* any ſuch extraordinary Authority. As, ſince the deſtruction of their firſt Temple, they have jealouſly abſtain'd from all manner of Idolatry; ſo too they have preſerv'd themſelves from this Spiritual Sacriledge,

Sacriledge, of taking to themselves what belongs to God, and invading so high a gift without his Grant.

Chap 3. *The Proofs from Scripture insufficient.* Sect. 1.

The constant receiv'd Doctrine of the *Jewish* Masters concerning this matter, is as follows.

(1.) With them it is no impossible supposition, that the whole *Sanhedrim* might err in their Judgment, not only unwittingly, but knowing, even against an express Law; and that, not only against some part of it, but against the whole, both root and branch. These Cases are all suppos'd possible in Practice, and accordingly Offerings for the Sins consequent to such a false judgment, are assign'd in *Maimonides*; according as the guilt should be suppos'd to lye, either upon the particular Persons who followed the false direction, or on the Government that gave it.

Libr. de Sacrif. ex Interpretat. *Lud.* de *Veil.* Tract. 4°. Cap. 12, 13, 14.

(2.) And therefore in Doubtful Cases, the proper subject of the *Sanhedrim's* Authority, the Truth of their Decisions was not suppos'd to proceed from the concurrence of any Divine Inspiration, but from rational Motives and Inferences: so that if upon a division in the Senate concerning the Interpretation of the Law; thirty five Prophets as great as *Elija*, and *Elisha*, had been of one Opinion, and thirty six Elders learned in the Law of the other, the Opinion of the un-inspir'd majority should have prevailed.

*Maimon.* in *Pocockii* Portâ *Mosis.* pag. 32.

(3.) And lastly, it may be observ'd, that the duty of obeying the Decree of the Majority, is suppos'd by the *Jews* to be intimated by that very Text, whose positive meaning is to forbid a blind Obedience: they presuming it imply'd in the general, that we should follow the most, or a Multitude; because we are commanded in particular, not to follow the most, or a multitude to do evil.

23 *Exod.* 2.

We see then that Infallibility is not given by *Moses* to the great Senate; that such a claim was never made by the *Jews*; and must not be allowed them by Christians.

We cannot therefore suppose that our Saviour gives the *Sanhedrim*, in the 23*d.* of St. *Matth.* more Authority, than they had before from *Deuteronomy*. The words are these. *The Scribes and Pharisees sit in* Moses *his Seat: all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and*

Chap. 3. *The Proofs from Scripture insufficient.* Sect. 1.

*do. But do not ye after their works; for they say, and do not.* Now it is not well imaginable, that Christ should direct an Obedience without reserve to be paid to those, whom presently after he calls Blind Guides, and whose Errour in Doctrine he taxes, together with the viciousness of their Lives: no more than we can think, that he there orders the multitude to joyn hereafter with the Senate in the demand of his Death, and to promote his Crucifixion. But such a sence of the place is too gross, ev'n for the *Roman* Commentators to own. *Maldonate*, *A Lapide*, *&c.* are asham'd of it; and make it unnecessary for us to cite St. *Chrysostome*, or any other Ancient to the contrary. And indeed nothing is plainer, if we take the words positively, than that our Saviour, being to censure the conduct, and not yet designing to lessen the just Authority of the *Jewish* Magistracy, prefaces therefore to the multitude the injunction of a due obedience. But they may be taken comparatively, not enjoyning but supposing an Obedience; and then directing that the Commands of those Men should be observed, rather than their Examples: because, tho' they were Blind and Fools, yet they were greater Hypocrites, and their Lives were still more corrupt than their Doctrines; an intimation that has sometimes had its place in the Christian Church, even by the Confession of our Adversaries themselves.

After this tedious Enquiry into *Jewish* Infallibility, we may think we had reason to thank the Ingenuity of the *Guide in Controversy*; who, if we would have follow'd him but in this, would have spar'd us at least so much pains. But we shall find there was as much of Discretion, as Ingenuity in him; and that we have not lost our labour, while we gain'd the following Corollaries.

FOR NOW WE KNOW,

I. That a Church of God may be founded without the Institution of an Infallible Judge.

II. That the Infallibility pretended by the *Roman* Church, is an Original, and that this controversie is a new Case, and of the first Impression; to be debated therefore

fore by proper Arguments from the Christian Religion.

Chap. 3. *The Proofs from Scripture insufficient.* Sect. 1.

III. That the Authorities to be vouched for it, ought to be very full and precise, more full and more expres, than those of *Deuteronomy*, or St. *Matthew*. For we see, that if our Saviour had either commanded us on any doubt *to go up to* Rome, *and consult a Congregation of Bishops assembled there, and to observe and do according to all they should inform us, under the Penalty of Excommunication or Death*; or had enjoyn'd us *to observe*, &c. *all which a Council should bid us observe and do*, &c; that yet, even from words so positive and large as these, so extraordinary a thing as the Infallibility of that Council must not have been concluded.

Whether then our Author has any such proper Christian Authorities, more clear and plain to the point, than those would have been; we are now going to enquire.

§. II.

We come now to the Scriptures alledged by our Author. The first place is the 28*th* Chapter of St. *Matthew*, the 19*th*. and 20*th*. verses, take in the 17*th* and 18*th* verses, and the words are these. *And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted, and Jesus came, and spake unto them, saying, all Power is given unto me in Heaven and in Earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all Nations, Baptising them in the Name*, &c. *teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo I am with you always, even to the end of the World.*

These words, *lo I am with you always*, &c. are a promise of Assistance, conceiv'd in general terms, to be restrain'd therefore in all reason at the pleasure of God the Donor; and which are to be suppos'd sufficiently fulfill'd, in what ever particular they shall be found to have been made good. All sort of assistance which God could give, and at all minutes, was not to be expected from them, not by the Apostles themselves, to whom they were spoke immediately.

Consequently therefore, if we of the later Ages shall take this Promise to our selves, we cannot determine its performance to what particular we shall think fit: neither if we find it fulfill'd to the Apostles in some very extraordinary ways, amongst others more ordinary; are we

Chap. 3. *The Proofs from Scripture inſufficient.* Sect. 2.

therefore to demand the higher aſſiſtances, but to reſt abundantly content, with thoſe other Divine Graces that ſhall be vouchſafed us.

This eaſie obſervation is a ſufficient anſwer to all pretence of Modern Infallibility from this place. But becauſe we deal with Adverſaries, that are not ſo eaſily ſatisfied; and this Text is offer'd to us firſt, and brought into the Front; we will therefore, with the Readers leave, take a more particular notice of it.

*1ſt.* Then we will conſider the words, as ſpoke to the Apoſtles, and to be accompliſht to them. Now here, tho' the Aſſiſtance promis'd under ſuch a general expreſſion, may ſeem to include that Infallibility, with which the Apoſtles were afterwards eminently endow'd from on high; yet it may be thought principally to be intended of other aids. The *Guide* indeed, who therefore brings in only the precedent verſe, would refer the Promiſe to the ſubject of Doctrine, and their capacity of Teaching: but it is plain even thence, that their knowledge is ſuppos'd, and the Commands mention'd, as receiv'd already; their Courage and aſſurance were rather wanting, to the undertaking ſo dangerous a Miſſion, and ſuch an incredible Errand; as the preaching up to the *Jews* a Meſſiah, but now Crucify'd by them for an Impoſtor, might well ſeem. Of the truth of their Lord's Reſurrection and Doctrines they could not well doubt; but how they ſhould be believ'd, they might juſtly diſtruſt. To this purpoſe it was that our Saviour firſt arms them with the knowledge of the Power, with which he was inveſted; and then afterwards, under the protection of that Power, commands them on their Duty, bidding them not to fear now, nor deſpond hereafter; for notwithſtanding he was now to leave the Earth, yet he would ſtill be with them, to give their hearts courage, and their words Authority, that they *might ſpeak the word with all boldneſs, and that Signs and Wonders might be done* by the Holy Name they were to Preach; ſo he would always be with them in the diſcharge of their Office here, till at laſt they ſhould be with him for ever in Heaven. This ſeems to be the natural ſcope and ſence of the words,

and

and therefore what we read order'd and promis'd in the end of St. *Matthew*'s Goſpel, that in the cloſe of St. *Mark*'s we find accordingly perform'd: *They went forth and Preached every where*, they doing as they were commanded; and *the Lord*, purſuant to his promiſe, *working with them, and confirming the word by Signs following.*

But then 2*dly*, ſuppoſing Infallibility comprehended equally with thoſe other gifts to be vouchſaf'd the Apoſtles; yet it will not follow, that the Promiſe was equally meant to the Doctours or Diſciples of all Ages. For (1.) it may be ſaid, that this Promiſe made to the Apoſtles might be Perſonal, and needs not by any neceſſary conſtruction be carried to their Succeſſours at all. For though theſe words, *to the end of the world*, taken by themſelves, may continue the Grant till that time, and may be ſuppos'd in the failure of the Apoſtles, to leave the benefit of it to their Succeſſours for the remaining term: yet the ſame words may too bear a very proper ſence in conjunction with the Perſons of the Apoſtles; either that our Saviour would be with them to the worlds end, that is always with them in this World, as long as they ſhould continue in it; as in our Law, and ſometimes in the Scripture, an Eſtate for ever, is an Eſtate for Life; or elſe, that he would be with them on Earth till their Death, and then when they ſhould go hence, in Heaven. However, in the 2*d* place, not to inſiſt on ſuch ſtrictneſs, but ſuppoſing the promiſe of Aſſiſtance to go along with the command of Teaching and Baptizing, yet it cannot be preſum'd to go down in its whole latitude, and wideſt extenſion; that our Saviour ſhould be bound by it, to be with the Biſhops of this time, juſt in the ſame manner, and by the ſame meaſures, he was heretofore with the Apoſtles themſelves. For, as he that ſhould offer to prove, that the Apoſtles yet live, and ſhall live here to the worlds end, becauſe the Lord promis'd to be with them till that time; would bring a ridiculous interpretation, notoriouſly untrue: ſo he, who ſhall aſſert that the ſame their extraordinary Gifts ſtill continue; muſt be contented to have his interpretation contradicted by as plain Evidence of Fact. For ſuch a ſence cannot be confirm'd

21 *Exod.* 6. 15 *Deut.* 17.

Chap. 3. *The Proofs from Scripture insufficient.* Sect. 2.

confirm'd but *by Signs and Wonders following*, the same which were wrought by the Apostles. We might therefore put our Adversaries upon a very difficult proof, and desire they would demonstrate their Infallibility by a Concomitance of the other Miracles: but we need not go so far on this Text. For here their pretence to Infallibility destroys it self; neither do they presume to claim it, as it was granted at first. They will not say that every Bishop, though of an Apostolical See, has always been Infallible; and by what reason then, from this Promise, must the Majority prove so? for this place gives no more Infallibility to them in a Body, than asunder: nay what it promises to them, it promises apart; that our Saviour should be with them Teaching and Baptizing, an Office perform'd by the Apostles apart, and in their several Missions. They have therefore from this Text, construed too for them in the most favourable manner, no more Authority to assign Infallibility to any Number of Bishops, than to any single Bishop; and have as much reason hence to ascribe it to any other Bishop, Successour of the Apostles, as to the Bishop of *Rome*.

But notwithstanding common sence and ordinary reason finds nothing for that Infallibility of after Ages in this Text, yet does not Tradition interpret otherwise? and has not God somewhere, by some unwritten word, given the *Roman* meaning to this part of the Written?

No Antient Commentator that I know, has stray'd into such a sence. But had any, yet we might have known that they learnt it not from Authentick Tradition: for then it would not have been omitted by St. *Chrysostom* for the *Greeks*, and St. *Jerom* for the *Latins*, both purposely commenting on the Place. The Interpretation I gave at first as the most natural, is St. *Chrysostom's*: and what St. *Jerom* gives is in part the same; *he who promises that he will be with the Disciples to the end of the World, both shews that they are to live for ever, and that he will never depart from the Faithful.* It appears therefore by these Fathers, that our Adversaries sence has no Authority from Tradition: a Remark I make expressly on this Text, with a request, that

Ch. 7. Art. 6.

that the Reader himself would be pleas'd to observe it on those that follow.

Chap. 3. *The Proofs from Scripture insufficient.* Sect. 2.

The indifferent Reader will not, I hope, need to be advertis'd, that the various interpretations we give to this, or the other places of Scripture, are not brought by us, to cast an ambiguity upon the Text; but only to shew, that almost any meaning that can be offer'd, deserves to be preferr'd before the *Roman*.

But here he is desired to take notice, that as yet we see neither Infallible Judge mention'd, nor his Person assign'd, nor the Causes of which he is to determine expres's'd, nor any thing else so much as hinted at, which we might have expected to find positively declar'd: nor, to speak once for all, is he to hope to see any such thing hereafter. He may too observe on this place, and find it verify'd in the rest, that those who exercise Infallibility in voting Conclusions, are not very good at Inferring. Whatever is any where promis'd to the Apostles our Infallible Guides is challenged to their Successours as Guides too: and no difference made, between the extraordinary Gifts vouchsafed to the first Founders of the Church; and those ordinary Graces that were still to continue to its ordinary Ministers. But here they are quickly at a loss. For working of Miracles should then belong to the Churchmen: but because every one sees that neither Pope nor Councils work them, they are oblig'd to wave their pretences on that side. Personal Infallibility should belong to all Successours of the Apostles on the same account, and all Bishops be Infallible, for the better guidance of the People; but they are forc'd to drop this claim too, for the vanity of it would be too apparent. This High Priviledge is therefore to be given by them only to one Bishop as the Pope, or to an Assembly of all Bishops: but this is not safe neither; for the Popes have shew'd where Councils have err'd, and Councils have found the same infirmity in Popes. The best way then, one would think, is to challenge it to the Pope and Council joyntly and together: for there have not been many of those Conjunctions in 1600 year; and it is to be hop'd that these few have kept from contradicting one another, or from any of the more gross absurdities.

Chap. 3. *The Proofs from Scripture inſufficient.* Sect. 2.

ſurdities. But becauſe it may have happen'd that ſome particular extravagancies of thoſe Bodies may have diſpleas'd even their own Communion; it is thought expedient not to allow even to the Truſtieſt Infallible, an Infallibility at large. For notwithſtanding its Apoſtolical Endowment, it may command ſome things unlawful: and even a Decree in form, if it preſumes to meddle with the Secular Power, may be falſe. So do they give ground, as abſurdities preſs on; retrenching ſtill as they go: but as for any Right the word of God gives them, they have no more legal title to the place on which they ſtand, than to the reſt which they have deſerted. From all this ſhuffling courſe it manifeſtly appears, that the Charter on which they proceed is not from God: for they limit it as they pleaſe; and they could not be ſo bold with it, if it were not of their own making.

§. III. We are directed next to ſee St. *John* 14. 16, 26. and 16. 15. with reference to the 15*th Acts* 28. 1 *John* 5. 20. and 1 *Cor.* 12. 7, 8.

In the Citations from St. *John*, let us, with our Guide's leave, begin at the Firſt verſe of the 14*th* Chapter: (remembring, that the whole diſcourſe of our Saviour is addreſs'd particularly to his Diſciples, under their preſent Melancholy Circumſtances, expecting his Impriſonment and Suffering.) [1.] *Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe alſo in me.* [12. *v.*] *Verily I ſay unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do ſhall he do alſo, and greater works than theſe ſhall he do; becauſe I go unto my Father.* [13. *v.*] *And whatſoever ye ſhall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.* [16. *v.*] *If ye love me, keep my Commandments.* [16 *v.*] *And I will pray the Father, and he ſhall give you another Comforter, who ſhall abide with you for ever.* [21. *v.*] *He that loveth me ſhall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifeſt my ſelf to him.* [25. *v.*] *Theſe Things have I ſpoken unto you, being yet preſent with you.* [26. *v.*] *But the Comforter which is the Holy Ghoſt, whom the Father will ſend in my name, he ſhall teach you all things, and bring all Things to your Remembrance; whatſoever I have ſaid unto you.*

*you.* 16 Chap. 12. *I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.* [ 13. *v.* ] *Howbeit, when He the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all Truth;* —— *and will shew you things to come.*



After the Reply Mr. *Chillingworth* has made to Mr. *Knot* [ *Chapt.* 3. §. 71. ] concerning these Texts, they ought not to have been brought forth to the same purpose again. Mr. *Chillingworth* had observ'd, that those promises of the Holy Ghost were made to the Apostles themselves conditionally, upon supposition of their Divine Love and Obedience; such terms, upon which they were not to be Challeng'd by the Majority of Bishops of every Age.

This Observation the Guide excepts against; because, as he says, (1.) It makes the Apostles Infallibility uncertain, and to depend upon suppositions: and (*2dly,*) because the duration of a Christian Church, being inferr'd from the like Promises, must be as uncertain as its Infallibility. *Guide in Controver.* Disc. 1. §. 7.

Now this last Reason is a perfect fallacy: for tho' we grant, that in all Ages there shall be such a Degree of Divine Love and Obedience, as shall save some of the Clergy; yet it follows not, that there shall be always so much, and in so many, as to make a Majority Infallible. But of this in its more proper place. And as for the first Reason, it is an unholy reflection upon all the Apostles; and particularly (as one would think he might have discern'd) on St. *Peter* the denyer of his Master; as if there were any question to be made, after the descent of the Holy Ghost, of their performing the Conditions; and as if God had not wrought in them all that Holiness he had made necessary to their Infallibility. Chap. XIII.

But we need only to observe the unreasonable arrogance, wherewith these Texts are challeng'd to the present Clergy. Our Saviour here comforts his Disciples in a very particular manner; and makes them Promises of an extraordinary Nature; (1.) of bringing all those things which he had said or did, and they through the blindness or dulness of their hearts had never animadverted, or else forgot, to their remembrance; (2.) of leading them into

Chap. 3. *The Proofs from Scripture inſufficient*, Sect. 3.

all Truth, more than he had yet taught them, and which before they could not bear; (3.) of ſhewing them Things to come——; and (4.) of enabling them to work Miracles. By the firſt of which, they ſhould be able to give account of his Actions upon the Earth, as Evangliſts; by the other, to fill up and perfect his new Covenant, as Apoſtles and Doctors: by the Third to be Prophets under the New Teſtament, as there had been under the Old; and by the fourth, to Evidence the truth of all this by Signs and Wonders. Theſe Promiſes were made, and eminently then perform'd unto the Apoſtles for our ſakes; and, by the Apoſtolical inſtruction we have receiv'd, the advantage of thoſe promiſes has been ſufficiently derived down to us: But to entitle our ſelves immediately to them, we have no foundation; nor can we do it, but by expreſs Warrant, without the greateſt inſolence. The *Latine* Church does not ſay, that an Aſſembly of Biſhops can either work Miracles, or Propheſy; they do not pretend, that any new Truths are revealed to them, other than what the Apoſtles delivered, and the knowledge of the Old they have not by any Platonick Reminiſcence neither: whereas, if they claim'd any thing in theſe extraordinary Promiſes, they have an equal Title to all; to Miracles; to Propheſy; to more Truths ſpoke by Chriſt, than the Apoſtles ever told us; to more than were ever reveal'd by Chriſt on Earth, even to the Apoſtles themſelves. We have therefore from this place of Scripture, no greater Reaſon to expect from any Biſhop or Body of Biſhops, Miracles of the one ſort, than of the other; and have no further Obligation to believe the preſent Church Defining than Predicting, nor their Doctrines than their Legends.

Neither does the next Text, to which we are referr'd, alter the Caſe. 15. Acts 28. *It ſeem'd good to the Holy Ghoſt and to us*, ſay the Apoſtles and Elders and Brethren met together. Now the Apoſtles were perſonally Infallible; and who queſtions then but they were Infallible together? we firmly believe that the Holy Ghoſt was with them in the Council; for he was with them elſewhere, and apart:

Chap. 3. *The Proofs from Scripture inſufficient.* Sect. 3.

apart: but what ſignifies all this to prove, that now an Infallible Body ſhall be made by a number of fallible men? and how does it appear, that what ſeems good to a Majority of other Eccleſiaſticks, ſhall always ſeem good to the Holy Ghoſt too. Had the Doctrine of Infallibility been one of theſe Apoſtolical Decrees, that Council had been vouched properly: but there is no ſuch definition in the Acts of it. So much therefore our Adverſaries may collect hence, if they pleaſe; that upon Diſſentions ariſing, the Church may meet, and conſider, as the Apoſtles did: but that the Convention of every Age ſhall be alike Infallible, will by no means follow. We might, with their leave, obſerve here, that St. *James* is as great in this Council as St. *Peter*, and ſpeaking laſt, ſeems to have had the more Honourable Place: he preſided, ſays St. *Chryſoſtom*, becauſe he was Biſhop of that See. But I ſhall rather deſire the Reader to take notice, that St. *Chryſoſtom* upon this place, ſpeaking concerning the Scandals thoſe cauſe, that in the Apoſtles name trouble Chriſtians, perverting their Souls; and concerning the Difficulties, in his days too pretended, of diſcerning Truth; does not take an occaſion from this Council, to ſend the doubting Chriſtian to the Oracle of any other Modern Aſſembly: but on the other ſide, upon the mention of the writing the Apoſtles in this Council ſent, he recommends to us their other Scriptures; and there, inſtead of directing us to the Judgment of a living Infallible Interpreter, he refers us finally to our own.

Another place we are deſired to compare with the foregoing, is 1 *John* 2. *Ch.* I ſuppoſe *v.* 20, 27. Writing to *Little Children, Fathers, and Young Men*, [13. *v.*] he tells them [18 *v.*] *as ye have heard that Antichriſt ſhall come, even ſo now are there many Antichriſts; they went out from us, but they were not of us,* [20. *v.*] *but ye have an Unction from the Holy one, and ye know all things.* [21. *v.*] *I have not written unto you, becauſe ye know not the Truth.* [24. *v.*] *Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that ye have heard from the beginning ſhall remain in you; ye ſhall alſo continue in the Son, and in the Father.* [26. *v.*] *Theſe Things have I written*

Chap. 3. The Proofs from Scripture inſufficient. Sect. 3.

*unto you concerning them which ſeduce you.* [27. *v.*] *But the Annointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any one teach you; But as the ſame annointing teacheth you all things, and is Truth, and is no Lye, and even as it hath taught you, ye ſhall abide in him.* [28. *v.*] *And now, Little Children, abide in him, that when he ſhall appear, we may have confidence*, &c.

We have taken leave to ſet down ſomething more of the Text, than we were directed to; and it may be we may be ſatisfied by this inſtance, how little of the Scripture would come to our ſhare, if the Doctors of the other Church had the Monopoly of it, and could retail it as they pleas'd. But, were there no Scriptures at all, what ſort of Stories Oral Tradition would make, you may gueſs by this Citation.

The Text out of the *Acts* produc'd next before, mentions a Council, and this is brought to be collated with the other, and to make out that Conciliary Authority: as if by this method the Guide would have it ſurmis'd, that theſe words were wrote by St. *John* to ſome Council or other; and an ignorant Man might be left then to think that they were meant to the Council of *Trent*. Whereas they are not addreſſed to Eccleſiaſticks, to the Pope, and ſuch a number of Biſhops, but in general to the Faithful; (orderly reckon'd in Ranks, as the *Jews* upon occaſion were us'd to be plac'd;) to Fathers, Young men, and Children: thoſe too in all probability not of the *Weſtern* Church neither, but of ſome other part of the Catholick, where the truly Antichriſtian and Blaſphemous Hereſies, that deny'd God the Father to be the Creator, or the Son to have been real man, began to *overthrow the Faith of ſome*. Againſt theſe Damnable Doctrines he confirms the Diſciples, exhorting them to abide in that Truth, which they had heard from the beginning; and telling them, (to fix them the more in the Truth, by an ill Character of thoſe that were gone, and a good one of themſelves,) that thoſe who are gone after the Antichriſts, were always all along no Chriſtians; and that they, the true Chriſtians, were in no great danger of being deceiv'd into ſuch groſs abſurdities,

τάξεις, Πρεσβυτῶν καὶ Νέων καὶ Παιδίων. *Philo.* Legat ad *Caium.*

dities, having their Unction from the Holy One; (that Unction by which they were again properly to be call'd Christians, and by which they would so remain;) being secured by the grace of God, and the knowledge they had already received, as having been fully instructed heretofore in such Truths, and knowing well all things belonging to that Subject. This is the obvious sence of the words. Now, from this place, that very Church, and those Persons to whom the Apostle writes, could not well have arrogated to themselves an impossibility to declare for those Hereticks, not even in those matters there spoken of; St. *John's* expressions speaking a charitable probability, and his obliging confidence, rather than any positive assertion. However, it can never be imagin'd, that those Persons are here pronounced Infallible in *All things*, in all other points of Faith whatsoever. And then besides, if such an Infallibility be affirm'd here, it belong'd to the Laity, as well as to the Clergy. But after all, if St. *John* had pronounced so much concerning those men of that time, from some supernatural knowledge of their Minds and Dispositions; by what Revelation are we to learn, that the same saying shall be as true of us, and that the men of the last, or our Age, *know all things* too? Under such a multiplicity of absurdities and inconsequences, the deduction of the *Roman* Pretence, from this place, labours. *Oecumenius* understands *all* those *things*, said to be *known* to the Disciples, to be these: *The last hour*; *that Antichrists abounded*; and *that the World was full of Lies.* All this we know too; and think our selves therefore oblig'd to take the direction in the 4*th* Chapter of this Epistle, (instead of that submission the Guide would perswade,) *Beloved believe not every Spirit, but try the Spirits whether they be of God:* as also that other in the last Verse of the Epistle, *Little Children keep your selves from Idols*, Amen.

The last Authority to be compared with the precedent, is from the 1 *Cor.* the 12*th* Chapter, and the 7*th* and 8*th* verses; to which we shall add the three following. *But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withall. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of Wisdom,*

10

Chap. 3. *The Proofs from Scripture insufficient.* Sect. 3.

*to another the word of Knowledge by the same Spirit, to another Faith by the same Spirit, to another Gifts of Healing by the same Spirit, to another the working of Miracles, to another Prophesy, to another discerning of Spirits, to another divers kind of Tongues, to another Interpretation of Tongues. But all these worketh that one and self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.*

If the Guide had imagin'd we would have look'd into the place, sure he would not have sent us to it. For is it not manifest, that the Apostle describes the particular State of the Church in his days? the variety of extraordinary Gifts with which it was enriched? to what purpose, and by whom they were bestow'd? by the Spirit, to the profit of the Brotherhood, and edification of the rising Church; not for the ostentation and vain glory, nor at the choice of the Persons endow'd? Now at that time, if to one was given by the Spirit the word of Wisdom, to another the word of Knowledge; so to one was given the Gift of Healing by the same Spirit, to another the working of Miracles, *&c.* And as these last sort of Gifts have long since ceas'd, so may it be, that the first have abated much of that extraordinary measure, by which they were then bestow'd. For God gave those Graces then to every Man severally as he thought fit, and by such proportions as he pleas'd: in like manner has he since given to every Age, not the same Gifts, but under a diversity of dispensation; to one Age those Miraculous Powers, for the extraordinary Conviction and instruction of the first Believers; to another, the less suprizing, tho' not less *excellent*, the abiding Graces; to one the presence of his Servants, to another their Writings; dividing to each severally as he will, as it shall seem most convenient to his Heavenly Wisdom, and good pleasure.

The *Corinthians*, amidst that variety of wonderful gifts then vouchsafed, were desirous, it seems, to have the most wonderful for their share: and that of Tongues was chiefly *coveted* by them in those days; for some wrong respect it appears, and not agreeably to the purpose of God. Our Adversaries have other designs, and covet a Miracle

Miracle of another sort: Infallibility, or a *Wisdom* or *Knowledge* Unerring, is their Choice. This choice of theirs is made they think, with some wisdom: and, did it appear that they had it, it would be to our profit and content. But whereas the *Corinthians* are reproved for coveting a particular Miracle, in that plentiful time of Miracles: the *Romanists* covet their Miracle now, when God had ceas'd to bestow the rest. However, if they coveted only, it were more tolerable, tho an offence still: but they further, take it to themselves; produce no Charter for it from God, and yet would force us to bear witness to the Gift. When too the *Corinthians* pretended to any of these Miracles, either the Gift prov'd it self openly, as in the Case of Healing, Tongues, and even of Wisdom and Knowledge, if above their natural Parts and Education; or else it was attested by the concomitance of the other manifest ones: but this pretended Gift of our Adversaries, is neither attended with others, to bear it Company and Evidence it; nor does by any means manifest it self, and shine out with any Lustre of its own. They claim it by no other reason, but because it was heretofore in the Apostolical times given to others; and they, they think, either deserve it as much, or want it mightily.

That is the Argument the Guide makes from these places, which he desir'd should be compar'd. Those places make no promise of a Living Infallible Director to all Ages; and chiefly, if not solely, concern the Persons to whom they are spoken, the first Planters of the Gospel: but in his opinion, one at least of those extraordinary Powers should descend, as there should be occasion for it, to the Interpreting of doubtful Scripture, and for the instruction of succeeding times; for, says he, it is very *Needful*. A good Argument to make out a Title; as if we had a Right presently, to every thing that would be of advantage to us. This is the Modern *Droit de Bienseance*, transferr'd to Spirituals, and pleaded against the Holy Spirit. But how true would the inference be, that all Missionaries have the Gift of Tongues, because it is highly necessary to their Office? or would it be a good Proof, that

Chap. 3. *The Proofs from Scripture inſufficient.* Sect. 3.

that Miracles are now wrought in *Rome*, becauſe there may be Atheiſts that want them? If Hereſies make an Infallible Judge neceſſary, why was there a General Council for the firſt 300 year, the time of the moſt grievous and dangerous Hereſies that ever infeſted the Church? or muſt we affirm, againſt all Hiſtory, that there were ſuch Councils, becauſe there was ſo much need of them? But as needful as it is that a General Council with the Pope ſhould be Infallible, ſo much more profitable, to avoid delays, would it be that the Pope ſhould be Infallible alone; much more yet, that every Biſhop; and highly expedient that every Prieſt ſhould be that unerring Guide. They ſhew not much of Wiſdom or Knowledge, that make ſuch concluſions as theſe: however, that they have great need of the Gift, we allow.

§. IV. Let us ſee now the 18*th* Chapter of St. *Matthew*, and the 20*th* verſe, with which we are bid to compare the 17*th* and 18*th*. But we ſhall firſt deſire a Licenſe to read more of the context, and ſhall begin therefore at the 15*th* verſe. *Moreover, if thy Brother ſhall Treſpaſs againſt thee, go and tell him his faults between him and thee alone: if he ſhall hear thee, thou haſt gain'd thy Brother.* [16. *v.*] *and if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three Witneſſes every word may be eſtabliſh'd.* [17. *v.*] *and if he ſhall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church: but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be to thee as a Heathen and a Publican.* [18. *v.*] *Verily I ſay unto you, whatſoever ye ſhall bind on Earth, ſhall be bound in Heaven: and whatſoever ye ſhall looſe on Earth, ſhall be looſed in Heaven.* [19. *v.*] *Again, I ſay unto you, that if two of you ſhall agree on Earth, as touching any thing that they ſhall ask, it ſhall be done for them of my Father which is in Heaven,* [20. *v.*] *For where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midſt of them.* [21. *v.*] *Then* Peter *came to him, and ſaid, Lord, how oft ſhall my Brother Sin againſt me, and I forgive him,* &c.

This whole Chapter directs our behaviour to our Brethren; and particularly, from the 15*th* verſe, if a Brother ſhall Treſpaſs againſt us, by what ſteps we are to proceed, and

and after how many Admonitions to give him over. Where we are told, that if the offending Perſon does not recover himſelf, and ask Pardon; he ſhall be bound, that is, Condemn'd before God as well as men: but if Brethren agree, the Offence ſhall be pardon'd in Heaven, nay nothing ſhall be deny'd them by their Father. This is the natural meaning of the words; and the ſame is underſtood by the Fathers, particularly by St. *Chryſoſtom*: ſo that no other ſence can be oppos'd to it, as from Authentick Tradition. Now to wave the interpretation of thoſe that will not ſuppoſe this Proceſs to end in a formal Excommunication of the Offender, and cutting him off from the whole Aſſembly, but only in a Licenſe given to the offended Perſon, after that to break off the former correſpondence, and no more to converſe with him: not too to take notice that St. *Auguſtin*, and St. *Chryſoſtom*, in this Caſe, make the Parties injur'd to be the Perſons that bind or looſe, according as they ſhall remit the Offence or not: to paſs by all this, and to ſuppoſe that the Biſhops have here an Authority given, and that Excommunication is directed; yet this at leaſt muſt be granted, that the 17*th* and 18*th* verſes do not ſpeak concerning the Catholick Church, but only concerning a particular Congregation, nor concerning defining of Doctrines, but admoniſhing and cenſuring an injurious Perſon. In the firſt place therefore, no more Authority can be challenged hence to the Univerſal Church, than is to be allow'd to any ſingular: and then in the ſecond place, ſince in our Adverſaries own Opinion, the Keys of the Church may err, and Condemn the Innocent; how ſhall this Text, that does not make the Diſcipline of the Church unerring, of which only it can be ſurmis'd to ſpeak, prove it Infallible in Articles of Faith, of which it ſays not a Syllable? As to the 19*th* and 20*th* verſes, if they referr to the Context, they are to be conſtrued to the ſame ſence, (that given above;) and will be as little to our Adverſaries purpoſe: if too they are taken abſtracted, they will be no more at their ſervice neither.

*See Diſc. 1. Chap. 7. Art. the 4th.*

If you look upon a Brother as a *Heathen* or *Publican*, you have bound him on Earth: if you have corrected your Brother, you have loos'd him. *Aug. Hom. 15. De Verbis Dom.*

Chap. 3. *The Proofs from Scripture inſufficient.* Sect. 4.

neither. For ſuppoſe we, that the Promiſe was abſolutely fulfill'd to the Apoſtles, and that whatſoever any two of them deſired was granted: yet to others, it muſt be underſtood in a more limited ſence; upon condition, things convenient are ask'd, by a good man, in the Spirit of Charity, for a worthy Perſon, who too contributes his beſt endeavour. Theſe Conditions St. *Chryſoſtom* ſays are imply'd under the Phraſe, *in my Name*; and that two or three are rarely ſo met together. *For it is not*, ſays he, *every Synod* or meeting *that is meant by our Saviour*, but one ſo qualified. It is manifeſt theſe words can be brought to promiſe no more: neither will it follow hence, if a number of Biſhops meet together, and pray to God to give their Majority an Infallible Spirit, that therefore immediately they are to have it, which is the only inference that can be made from this place. Beſides this Text, by our Adverſaries way of deduction, proves more than they themſelves will be content with: making the ſmalleſt Synod, as Infallible as the moſt Univerſal; and giving as much authority to any Biſhop and two or three Laymen, as to the greateſt Biſhop, joyn'd with two or three thouſand Biſhops more.

§. V. The next Proof for Infallibility is from the 16*th* of *Matth.* 18, 19, *v.* It is given by the Guide in Latine with a touch of Syriack: *Tu es Petrus*, &c, and ſo no doubt is a better Argument to thoſe that underſtand not the Language: but in Engliſh the known words are theſe. *And I ſay alſo unto thee, that thou art* Peter, *and upon this Rock I will build my Church, and the Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt it. And I will give unto thee the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; and whatſoever thou ſhalt bind on Earth, ſhall be bound in Heaven; and whatſoever thou ſhalt looſe on Earth, ſhall be looſed in Heaven.*

*Launoy*, in the Seventh Letter of the Fifth *Tome*, reduces the ſeveral Interpretations of this Text, whether profeſſedly or incidentally given by Fathers and Doctors, to four ſorts. The firſt underſtands the Church to be built on St. *Peter*; the ſecond upon all the Apoſtles in common: the third upon St. *Peter*'s Confeſſion: the fourth upon the Rock Chriſt Jeſus. He then brings in order, under theſe diſtinct Heads, the ſeveral Expoſitions he finds: and at laſt, upon the review forms this Judgment. I. That the third and fourth way, which are the ſame in effect, have very

very much the advantage of Authority above the first. II. That, if the Fathers can be said to be Unanimous in any of these Expositions, they are so in the third; and much more so, if the fourth be reckoned with the third, as in right it ought. To these Observations I would add another: that of all those who make St. *Peter* the Rock, only St. *Jerom* is found to concern his Successours of *Rome* in it. and to make that See to be the Rock of the Text. And this too he insinuates by way of allusion only, in a Complemental Letter to Pope *Damasus*; but in his Commentary on this place, where he must be presum'd to give the true Sense, there he gives another.

Now of this place we have no certain Interpretation, from any Authentick Tradition, for St. *Chrysostom* (for example) makes the Rock upon which the Church was to be built, to be St. *Peter*'s Confession, that *Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God*; St. *Augustin*, with little difference, our Saviour so confessed: some expound it of St. *Peter*'s Person, and others jointly of the rest of the Apostles. The Gates of Hell, some take for Heresie and Vice; others, for Death and Destruction. That too, against which those Gates should not prevail, is commonly suppos'd to be the Church, but thought by St. *Jerom* to be the Rock; that is, in his Opinion, the Apostles. Besides, as to the Power granted to St. *Peter* in the next verse, whether of Teaching according to the *Jewish* Phrase, or of Discipline, or whatever other extraordinary Power; it is here but promis'd; not given, actually, 'till after the Resurrection, nor fully until *Pentecost*. This Promise therefore is to be expounded by the completion. And then we find, that the other Apostles were equally partakers of the Gift, both that of forgiving and retaining Sins, and that other of the Holy Ghost: as too it is apparent from the *Acts*, that St. *Peter* had no Power over the rest of the Apostles, nor any Negative upon them in the first Council.

From this place, several assertions have been advanc'd, either first in behalf of the See of *Rome*, or else of the Universal Church: in behalf of the *Roman* See, that it should have a perpetual existence, never err in Faith, and have the Government of the whole Church; in behalf of the Universal Church, that it should never fail, or never Err.

Now as to the Church of *Rome*, she seems not, by any rational construction, to have any private interest in this

Chap. 3. *The Proofs from Scripture inſufficient.* Sect. 5.

Text; neither does Tradition interpret it for her: the whole current of antient Authorities carrying it another way; St. *Jerom* himſelf, who calls her *the Rock*, in a Complemental Epiſtle which they much boaſt of, never in the leaſt mentioning her on the proper occaſion, in his Comment on the place. She cannot therefore fairly challenge hence the priviledge of perpetual Exiſtence, much leſs the Authority of a Supremacy: ſo far is ſhe from having any Title to Infallibility, a Prerogative abſolutely deny'd the Pope by the *Gallican*, and I ſuppoſe by our *Engliſh Romaniſts*.

See Ch. 5.

As to the Church in General, whether it can totally fail we do not diſpute. Whether too by vertue of this Text there muſt not always be preſerv'd an Unerring Church, (tho' we may hereafter, yet) we do not now queſtion: for That upon a Diviſion may be the Minor Part, and Diſſenting from the Pope, and undiſtinguiſhable by any outward Mark. But whether or no the Majority of the Church, or any aſſignable part of it, aſunder, or conſenting with the Pope, ſhall always be Infallible; that we deſire at preſent ſhould be demonſtrated from this place.

For when it is ſaid, that *the Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt the Church*, whether founded on St. *Peter*'s Confeſſion, or upon St. *Peter* ſo Confeſſing; the utmoſt that can be concluded is this, that ſuch a Church there ſhall always be, that ſimply ſhall confeſs that Article of Faith, or if you pleaſe, that ſhall in all points confeſs the whole Faith: but where that Church ſhall be, or what the numbers of that Church ſhall be is not defin'd here; neither is it made impoſſible for the greater or any aſſign'd part to Apoſtatize, much leſs to err in ſome ſingle point, provided ſuch a Church here ſpoke of ſhall ſome where or other ſtill remain. For ſuppoſe by this Text there is always to be an Unerring Church, yet the Text which (in the Opinion of the *Gallicans*) does not place that Unerring Church at *Rome*, does not neither (to do the *Papalins* right) aſſign her any other Seat; neither does it determine her numbers, or give us any other mark whereby ſhe may be diſcern'd. As then the *Roman* Church, that part of the Univerſal Church may err; ſo may any other aſſignable part

part of the Univerſal err too: and as the *Roman* Church may err alone; ſo too ſhe may err in Conjunction with any aſſignable proportion of the other Churches, and yet an unerring Church be preſerv'd ſtill.

When too it is promis'd to St. *Peter*, *that the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven ſhall be given him, and that what he binds*, &c. The Keys here mention'd, are either of Knowledge, or of Juriſdiction, or both. The Fathers generally underſtand it of the laſt; ſome Moderns of the firſt only: let us take them together. As then one is given, ſo the other: both eminently, and with exemption from Errour to the Apoſtles; ordinarily, and with no ſuch exemption to their Succeſſours. The Keys put into the hands of the Apoſtles, were Maſter-keys; the others open'd or ſhut but to ſuch Apartments: thoſe in the hands of the Apoſtles were rightly us'd; theſe in the hands of their Succeſſours, might be us'd amiſs, and againſt the will of the Maſter of the Houſe. So much is confeſſed by themſelves concerning the Key of Diſcipline: and if the Key of Knowledge be here to be underſtood; where the Text excepts the uſe of one from Errour, and not the other, they cannot ſhew. But as we obſerved before, our *Gallican Romaniſts* have unawares yielded up the Cauſe to us. For, if the particular Succeſſours of St. *Peter* have not Infallibility conveyed to them by this Text, other Succeſſours of the Apoſtles are not to expect it hence: and if the Biſhops have it not apart, they have then from this Text no warrant to claim it to the Majority of their Body with or without the Pope: which is the Propoſition ought hence to be prov'd, and after which at preſent we only enquire.

The next proof produc'd, is from 1 *Tim.* 3. 15. we begin at the former verſe. [14.] *Theſe Things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee ſhortly.* [15.] *But if I tarry long that thou mayeſt know how thou oughteſt to behave thy ſelf in the Houſe of God which is the Church of the Living God, the Pillar and Ground of Truth.* [16.] *And without Controverſy, great is the Myſtery of Godlineſs*, &c.

The *Church*, ſays our Guide, *unlimited to the Apoſtles's days*; that is, the Succeſſive Teachers of it, *are the Pillar and*

Chap. 3. *The Proofs from Scripture inſufficient.* Sect. 5.

*and Ground of Truth, the Foundation of God that ſtandeth ſure.* 2 *Tim.* 2. 19. But this which he lays down for ſure, is not ſo well founded. For firſt it ſeems to ſome not incongruous, to joyn theſe words *The Pillar and Ground of Truth*, in conſtruction with thoſe that follow, and not with thoſe that go before: a new Sence beginning with them, and running thus; *The Myſtery of Godlineſs* is the Pillar and Ground of Truth, and without Controverſie great, namely this, *God ſeen in the Fleſh, &c.* This Syntax the *Greek* will bear very well; and the ſence, (eſpecially if the Pillar of Truth be taken materially, and in St. *Chryſoſtoms*'s acceptation, which you find here below;) is not improper: however I may ſafely ſay it is much more natural than that which the *Romaniſts* would bring in upon us. But we need not flye to this Novel Conſtruction: for in the other, the receiv'd and authoriz'd one,

(2*dly.*) It is not certain, whether in this place *Timothy* himſelf be not ſuppos'd to be the Pillar and Ground of that Truth, which the Apoſtle, the Maſter Builder is now eſtabliſhing: the ſence running thus, *that thou mayſt know*, [as] *a Pillar and Ground of Truth, how*, &c. This has been ſuggeſted by Mr. *Chillingworth*, and has *Gregory Nyſſen* for its Voucher.

And then (3*dly.*) Suppoſing it not to be ſaid of *Timothy*, yet there are other Sences, under which it may be aſſirm'd. For St. *Chryſoſtom* taking Truth here as oppos'd to Type and ſhadow, and underſtanding a Pillar of Truth to be Phras'd, as a Pillar of Fire or Smoak, denominated not from what it ſupports, but of what it conſiſts; ſeems to give the Text this Conſtruction, *which is the Church of the Living God* being a *Pillar and Ground* [or whoſe Pillar and Ground is] of weighty and ſubſtantial Truth. His Paraphraſe runs thus. *The Houſe of God, which is the Church of the Living God, a Pillar and Ground of Truth, not as that* Jewiſh *Houſe. For this it is that Supports our Faith, and our Preaching: It is Truth, that is the Pillar and Ground of the Church.*

But

But (4*thly*.) Suppose the Church said to be the Pillar of Truth, as that which supported Truth, and on which it was built: if we take Truth in St. *Chrysostom*'s sence, as contra-distinguished to Types, the Sentence will not import, that the Church bears up all Truth, and nothing but the Truth; but only that it holds up and shews forth those great Truths, of which the Old Law was but the shadow, the great Mystery that follows, of *God manifested in the Flesh*, &c. And then this at best, should we suppose it to give the Church an Infallibility, would give it only in such Fundamentals, of which betwixt us and the *Romanists* there is no dispute.

But *lastly*, let the Church be said to be the foundation of Truth, that is of all saving Truths, so as to support them, raise them up, and shew them to the World. Take then the Church for its Policy and Frame, as it was constituted by the Apostles; and we readily acknowledge it to have been such: but this hinders not, but this Fabrick may since have been much impair'd, or defac'd, dilapidated, or superonerated by the folly of the Builders; tho' not entirely ruin'd, by reason of the firmness and strength of the Building. If too we understand by the Church the Persons who constitute it, we know well that the Apostles were its Pillars and Foundation, as they founded and supported it by their Doctrine and Rules; and that the Faithful edified and built up by them, were a Temple. We grant too that their Successours, at least the far greater part of them, did for some time make good those names, bearing up and evidencing the whole Truth. And yet notwithstanding it might remain possible, that the Majority of Clergy or People, who should come after, might fail any longer to support it or retain it; and that some since who seem'd to be Pillars, may have advanc'd their own Capitels too high; may have let fall something, of what ought to have been held up; and instead of that may have taken up some errour, and fix'd it *where it ought not, in the Holy Place.*

Gal. 2. 9.
Eph. 2. 20.
2 Cor. 6. 16.
1 Pet. 2. 5.

The Church therefore in either sence, taken either for the Building, or for the Builders, was actually in the Apostolical

Chap. 3. *The Proofs from Scripture inſufficient.* Sect. 5.

poſtolical times the Foundation and Ground of Truth: in the following Ages it ought to have been ſo likewiſe; that is the ſame frame ought to have been kept up; and it was the Duty of the Apoſtles Succeſſours, to be Pillars. But whether what ought always to be done, ſhould be done always, that this Text does not affirm. If it affirms at all, it affirms concerning the firſt Church: but of that certainly which was to come, it was no Propheſy, but an Exhortation. And as an Exhortation it may be well underſtood even to *Timothy* himſelf. For the Apoſtle inſtructs him in this Letter, how he is to behave himſelf; and here he intimates a weighty Motive for ſuch a behaviour, that he ſhould take good care, either to be a ſteady Pillar of the Church, or to ſee that the Frame of the Church was not injured under his Government: for the Church was the Houſe of the Living God; and the Truſt was very great, of the formerly Myſterious, now Conſpicuous Truths, committed to his Charge. He ought therefore to take great heed: and that the more, becauſe, as the Apoſtle proceeds to warn him, *the Spirit expreſly ſpeaketh, that in the latter times ſome ſhall depart from the Faith, giving heed to ſeducing Spirits, and Doctrines of Devils*, &c. *If* then ſays St. *Paul*, *thou put the Brethren in remembrance of theſe things, thou ſhalt be a good Miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt; take heed therefore unto thy ſelf and thy Doctrine*, &c. The Apoſtle not ſpeaking poſitively concerning the future demeanour even of *Timothy* himſelf, much leſs of any number of future Biſhops.

Chap. 4. v. 1.

verſe 6.

verſe 16.

This is the plain eaſie interpretation of this Place. As for that of the *Roman* Church, neither St. *Chryſoſtom*, nor the Authors of the Commentaries aſcribed to St. *Hierom*, or to St. *Ambroſe*, ever thought of it: whence we are at leaſt aſſur'd of this, that it is no more the Traditional, than it is the Rational meaning.

§. VI.

The 4*th* Chapter of the *Epheſians*, (the 11*th* and 14*th* verſes of which, are produced next by the *Guide*) begins with a general Exhortation, *that they would walk worthy of their Vocation:* and then, as to the particulars, directs firſt to Love and Unity, *that they ſhould keep the Unity of the*

*the Spirit in the Bond of Peace:* [3. *v.*] that those who had the more eminent Gifts should not contemn the rest; neither they which had the lesser, should be discourag'd, much less envy the others; for *Grace is given according to the measure* Christ has thought fit, and for common benefit: that *some are Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Ministry, for the edifying the Body of Christ*, all those co-operating to produce in each Christian the same Faith, and Knowledge of the Son of God; to the intent they may all grow up *to that measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ*, as to be *perfect Men, and no more Children, toss'd to and fro, and carried about with every wind of Doctrine, by the slight of Men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.* So does the Apostle caution them as to the first Particular, against those that would toss them to and fro, and break them one against another. He then at the 17*th* verse resumes the same general exhortation; *This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not, as other* Gentiles *walk*, &c. Proceeding to other Particulars, against the Sins of Lying, Anger, Stealing, Fornication, *&c.* That they should keep stedfast to the duties they knew, and suffer *no man that lies in wait, to deceive them with vain words* concerning these things. Now all that this place supposes, is, that heretofore there were Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers, the which we deny not: and the direction given to the *Ephesians* is this, that those Graces should not be made an occasion of Pride and Conceit, Division and Emulation, by the craft of ill men; but that the Disciples should suffer themselves to be edified and perfected by those Gifts, growing more men, than to be led away by every deceiver, into the deceitful lusts of their former un-regenerate State. This the Text spoke to the *Ephesians*, to whom it was writ: and the exhortation is good to us, that we should make the due improvement of the helps we enjoy, of what is come down to us from the Apostles and Evangelists, *i. e.* of the Holy Scriptures, and particularly of this Epistle.

Chap. 3. *The Proofs from Scripture insufficient.* Sect. 6.

But that a Succession of such highly qualified men should be continued down to our time, that is no supposition of the place. Yes, says the *Guide*, as long as men are liable to be tost about, there must be the same Infallibility: that is, there do continue the one sort of Persons, the Deceivers, and the Deceivable; and therefore the other must remain, that cannot err, the Apostles, or inspir'd Doctors; and as the winds of false Doctrine arise on one side, the Holy Spirit must of necessity descend down and blow on the other. But nothing can be more unreasonable, or more presumptuous, than this Inference. For that blessed Spirit blows where, and how it lists: and as it did not think fit, to obviate all Cavils and Objections, and to prevent all Deception then; so now it has not taken care, for a formal definition of all the questions that may have been rais'd since. If none had been deceiv'd in the Apostles time, and the Faith of every man had been fully assur'd, we might have wanted Infallibility more impatiently now: but men, we see, were tossed about in those days; and there was need, it seems, of something Super-Infallible, to have hinder'd it. Those *Apostles* therefore and *Prophets*, &c. were given, not absolutely to hinder winds of Doctrine from rising, nor to make it impossible that any deceivable men should be tossed about by those winds; but to give to the Chosen and Pure of Heart such a stability and Ancorage, that tho' they might be blown upon, and ruffled, yet they should be able to keep the Course to their Port, and not make Shipwrack of their Souls. Had it pleas'd the Divine Providence, Man at first might have been made Infallible, and Impeccable too; had the Holy Spirit so pleas'd, every Hearer of the Gospel, might have been a Believer, every Believer Infallible, and the will only left to its liberty of Obedience and Disobedience to what the Understanding knew. But the Creator took not this measure in the beginning, nor the Holy Ghost after. A few only were Infallibly assisted, and these did not Preach to every Man of that Age; and were not personally with their Infallibilty in all places where their Gospel came: neither did it appear upon them where they were, in such a Latitude,

Latitude, or with such an irresistable force, that there was no room for further enquiry, nor even a possibility of contradiction. For many, even in the Churches founded by the Apostles, doubted of their mind in many things, and many perversly gainsaid, who never had, it may be, the opportunity of any further instruction or conviction. As then it cannot be said without impiety, that this Divine method was defective, and that there was not at that time administred means of Knowledge sufficient for stability of Faith; God working by his own ways, his own end, choosing some Nations out for the hearing of the Gospel, and even then so proposing that Gospel to them, that the hearts of men might be try'd by its reception, and the approv'd be sav'd: so neither can it be said more venially in the after ages, that the good wisdom of God is wanting to it self, or them; if they have not their Apostles too, and find not such an Infallibility as they have fancied, continued to them. It is we that are wanting in Duty and Gratitude, we to whom the Scriptures of those Apostles are come, and who know more then many a Church Contemporary with the Apostles then did, (instructed, as many then were, by some not Infallible Teacher, and to which the Writings, sent by the Apostles to other places, were not yet communicated;) it is we, I say, that shall be wanting to God, and our selves, if we do not see, and confess, that we have those opportunities of knowledge God thought sufficient enough, to lead the honest and industrious into all saving Truths; tho' not so much, as every wanton idle man may wish, or every perverse Caviller demand. It was *needful* in the Opinion of the Rich man in Hell, that to reclaim his Brethren one should be sent from the dead: but it was thought as unnecessary by *Abraham*; for they had *Moses* and the Prophets, and if they would not hear them, they would not be perswaded, says he, tho' one came from the Dead. We have *Moses*, and the Prophets, our Saviour Christ, his Evangelists and Apostles; they have told us already what was thought necessary, and thence we must study their mind: but they will neither return on Earth themselves, nor send any other Infallible,

Chap. 3. *The Proofs from Scripture inſufficient.* Sect. 6.

to give us an exacter information. We are to be content with what God has given, and not undutifully pretend to more. And as no man perſuades himſelf that he is rich, becauſe he has need of Wealth; or that God has given him an excellent underſtanding, becauſe he finds he wants it: ſo neither is a Church to arrogate to it ſelf Infallibility, becauſe ſhe thinks ſhe needs it. But I have ſaid enough before of this begging Argument, drawn from pretended neceſſity, by ſuch as are unwilling to labour, and uſe their honeſt endeavour; which offers it ſelf here again, and is ſo impudent as not to receive an anſwer.

We return therefore to this Apoſtolical exhortation, and hope, that as every man muſt acknowledge himſelf ſufficiently inſtructed by it, in the Duty of abſtaining from Pride, Contention, Anger, Uncleanneſs, *&c*: So no man will have profited ſo little by the uſe of this and the other Scriptures, as not to diſcern between Modern Biſhops and the Apoſtles; nor to be ſo weak, as to be taken with the ſlight and juggle of this Argument, a *craftineſs* that is not *cunning*. For he muſt be *a Child*, that is *deceived* by ſuch an Inference: and with this wind from this corner, who-ever *turns*, *turns* eaſily. We grant to the *Guide* his allegation from St. *Peter*, 2 *Eph.* 3. 16. that ſome Scriptures *are hard to be underſtood:* but as to the Scriptures he here cites, it is not hard to underſtand that no Infallibility is imported by them. Thoſe hard places of St. *Paul*, which St. *Peter* means, were not the only places *wreſted by unlearned and unſtable men to their own deſtruction*, for ſo *alſo were the other Scriptures:* And the Reader, I preſume, does by this time ſee that no ſayings are more violently and unnaturally forc'd, than thoſe which are *wreſted* to this Infallibility even by *Learned* Men.

§. VII. The laſt Proof for this Infallibility is weaker, if poſſible, than any of the foregoing. It is taken from the frequent injunctions made by the Apoſtle to Paſtors and People, as [ 1 Cor. 1. 10. ] *That they ſhould all ſay one thing, and that there ſhould be no Schiſms among them:* [ Phil. 1. 27. ] *That they ſtand faſt in one Spirit, be of one mind:*

*mind:* [Phil. 2. 2, 3.] *That they be of one meaning, agreeing in one:* [3. 16.] *That they should continue in the same Canon or Rule:* [12. Rom. 16.] *that they should be of one mind, following along with the Humble, not Wise in their own conceits:* [Rom. 17. 17.] *That they should mark those that make Differences* and Scandals, *contrary to the Doctrines they had learned;* [1 *Cor.* 14 32, 33] *That the Spirits of the Prophets, are Subject to the Prophets,* &c. Now, says he, this Precept how can it be observed, unless there be in the Church some Persons, whose Judgment, Faith, *&c.* all the rest are bound to follow? And who can these be, but the *Guides*? *&c.*

So far the *Guides* meaning is true, that these exhortations suppose something in which Christians should be United: that is, the Truths of Christianity which they had receiv'd, and the mutual kindness they ow'd one to another. And so much may be suppos'd now, without the continuance of an Infallible Judge: there being Truths delivered to us, in which we ought to agree; and the same duty of Charity obliging us, in those things in which we differ. These Admonitions therefore concerning the Christian Faith and Love, do not direct us to repair to a Living Infallible *Guide*; but to make a careful use of the Heavenly Guidance, we have already receiv'd, as we will answer the neglect before our Eternal Judge. For though such exhortations take place, if there be a Judge deputed; yet they are so far from inferring one, that they are as proper, and more necessary, when there is none: being then pointed against Negligence, or Prejudice, or Passion, such things by which our own judgment may otherwise be corrupted. So two private Neighbours may be advis'd to end their Difference, and not so much as a Tryal by consent be ever thought of. So two Sovereign Princes may be Counsel'd to agree, and no Arbitrator appointed. And if in a Schism of *Antipopes*, any good man should have exhorted them to have removed the Scandal, he had not therefore made himself their Judge, nor suppos'd any other.

These Apostolical Directions do so little prove the design of a perpetual Infallibility, that they need not be encountred

Chap. 3. *The Proofs from Scripture insufficient.* Sect. 7.

countred by others, that are much stronger against it. Such as *Beware of False Prophets* [Mat. 7. 15.] *Prove all things, hold fast that which is good* [1 Thes. 5. 21.] *Believe not every Spirit, but try the Spirits, &c.* [1 Joh. 4. 1.] For from these, and other Passages, great Presumptions might be rais'd by us against the Popish Pretence: but the Proof lyes absolutely on their side; and what they produce is so weak, that it falls of it self, and excuses us from the trouble of any further opposition.

Now then, after we have with great Patience examin'd all their Scriptural Proofs, the Reader may be pleas'd to stand and take breath, and only to consider, whether he has found in them any the least degree of Evidence, that was necessarily to be expected for the Establishment of such a Power. He may reflect that first the design of a Judge did require, that his Person should be ascertain'd, his Jurisdiction expressed, in what Causes he should pronounce, and what Speech should be esteem'd his Sentence: and then 2*dly*, that the extraordinary nature of an Infallible Tribunal, which was to supersede our Natural *Guide*, and Suspend the Use of Human Understanding, and this in Affairs of infinite Moment; which was new too, and never before known to the World under the Old Testament; did require some very extraordinary notice, a notice under the New, more express than that Passage of *Deuteronomy*, as clear as any other Divine Revelation, and as plain as any Dictate of Reason. He was therefore to expect in this Case the Erection and Designation of such an Office, in Formal Precise terms, and as express, at least, as any other Article of our Faith. But instead of all this, he will remember that he has found no other Evidences produc'd, than such as will very fairly admit another, and a far easier Sence; nay, which require another Sence to be affix'd to them; which no Rational man unprejudic'd would ever Construe to the Popish meaning; and which *de facto*, none of the Ancient Celebrated Interpreters ever did: which too have been so far from being esteem'd by those Doctors to prove an Infallibility, that they never gave them so much as an occasional Hint

to

to mention and remember it on the place. From all which Conſiderations, I think I may, with the leave of any Equitable Reader, fairly conclude, that there is no Scriptural Teſtimony at all for the exiſtence of this pretended Judge.



And now, when our Adverſaries have fail'd ſo much in their Authentick Writings and Records, it remains, that they ſhould call us on to the hearing of their Unſcriptural Teſtimonies, and tell us, that they have many a Witneſs to produce who is able to ſpeak much to the Affair; that the Infallible Court is a Court by preſcription, and they can prove its Authority by infinite Depoſitions. Such pretended Witneſſes of theirs, which may be ſaid to be many in remote parts, and which they may pray to have examined, ſhall be enquired after, and fairly heard in due time. But in the mean while, that ſuch a Suggeſtion is made, only to put off the Sentence, and to hinder Juſtice, any Indifferent Reader will preſume aforehand.

For their failure of Proof from Scripture, does not only very much weaken and diſparage their Cauſe, by the want of the beſt ſort of Evidence; but does beſides enable us to form a very Peremptory Concluſion againſt them.

FOR AN INFALLIBLE COURT is a thing in it ſelf of ſo high a Nature, that it may well ſeem to require ſomething more Authentick than a Verbal Commiſſion for its warrant: It was withal ſo new and ſo ſtrange in our Saviour's time, that if any thing of his Inſtitution had been put in Writing, This in all Probability, could never have been omitted: beſides, the Knowledge of ſuch a Court was to be the Leading and the Principal Truth, by which all other Truths were afterwards to be regulated and fix'd, and by which the Chriſtians of all Ages were to be chiefly inſtructed: and therefore on all accounts it muſt have found a very particular mention in the Holy Records, if it had not been premis'd in the firſt place. But, however, if the Erection of this Court, with the Nomination of the Perſons, had not been Regiſtred by it ſelf, as a remarkable Paſſage, in the *Goſpels* or in the *Acts*; yet it could never have been forgot, when fit and proper occaſion was given, particularly

Chap. 3. *The Proofs from Scripture insufficient.* Sect. 7.

particularly in those places which the Romanists take for its Proof, and where they are so far in the right, that this Infallibility, had it been at all intended, ought to have been mentioned of necessity. For the Stability of the Church spoke of in St. *Matthew*, the Submission to the Church there directed, the Promise of the Holy Spirit, and of his assistance in St. *John*, were all, in our Adversaries opinion, proper places for this Subject, and such on which they for their part are never us'd to forget it. But the Apostle St. *Paul*'s distinct Ennumeration of Heavenly Gifts, his notice of the grievous Heresies that were to enter, his Cautions against them, his frequent Exhortations to continue in the True Faith, these certainly could never have suffered him to have pass'd by this wonderful Grace, and to have left the Disciples without the benefit of so necessary a Direction. Let any Roman Doctor, prepossess'd as they are, with the Opinion of an Infallible Guidance, consider with himself, whether in these Cases he would not have thought himself justly to be blamed, had he forgot it; whether he would not certainly have propos'd it, as the only effectual remedy, and Gods wisest Provision against Errour; and whether he would have fail'd to have address'd his doubtful Disciples to it: and then let him tell us, whether he can think St. *Paul* more forgetful than himself; or less Wise, or less Careful of the salvation of those to whom he writes. Of such a different Proceeding, there can be no cause assign'd, but the difference of the Principle by which the Apostles went, from that which has been since taken up by the latter Ages.

The proper design'd result of this Chapter was this, That there was no Scriptural Notice of a standing Infallibility: and from that Conclusion this Corollary does naturally follow, That there was not therefore any such Infallibility at all erected. As therefore we concluded the first Chapter, with a just suspicion against it, from the single view of the Pretence: so may we, by force of this Corollary, put a full end here to the whole Dispute; and justify our surceasing from any further Enquiry in so

ſo plain a Caſe. But the Reader, either out of Curioſity, or out of meer Grace to the Parties, and for ſuper-abundant ſatisfaction, may, if he pleaſes, proceed on with us to the other Allegations.

Chap. 4. *No Proof from Tradition for Infallibility at large.*

## CHAP. IV.

*No Proof from Tradition for Infallibility at Large. The Proofs from Tradition, to what they are to ſpeak, and of what kind they are,* [Sect. I.] *None of any kind for Infallibility in Groſs. Not from the Article of the Creed concerning the Church. This prov'd in general from the nature of the Creed,* [Sect II] *: then from the particular conſideration of the Article* [Sect. III]. *Whence ariſes another Peremptory Concluſion againſt the whole Pretence* [Sect. IV].

§. I. FRom the Proofs taken out of Scripture, we now deſcend to thoſe we are to expect from Tradition. But although in the Scriptural Teſtimonies we were content to follow that order, which the *Guide* thought moſt advantagious to his Cauſe; yet here, where he has not been pleas'd to lead us the way, we ſhall take our ſelves to be at liberty to purſue a more natural method.

We may therefore conſider the Traditional Evidence, for an Infallible Judge or Guide, either, (1) as they ſpeak, ſuch an Infallible Authority in groſs, not aſcertaining the Perſon; or elſe as it is determin'd to certain Perſons: If determin'd; either (2) as aſſignable to the Pope ſingly, or in general to the majority of the Body of Biſhops; and thoſe whether (3) apart and in their ſeveral Dioceſſes, the diffus'd Church; or (4) aſſembled together in a Council; or elſe (5) laſtly, to the Pope and that Majority

 conſenting.

Chap. 4. *No Proof from Tradition for Infallibility at large.*

consenting. The Majority of all the Bishops I say, because our present Enquiry supposes a Division in the Church upon some new question, concerning which all Bishops are not agreed.

The Subject to which these Traditional Testimonies are to speak may be so distinguish'd. The Testimonies too themselves may be of different kinds: either (1) Tradition properly Divine, some Sayings of our Saviour or his Apostles, reported from their Mouths, whether verbally or summarily, by the Antients; or else they may be the Opinion and Judgment of those Antients, express'd, or (2) in their Writings; or (3) by their Practice. These are the three sorts of Unscriptural Evidence, that must prove an Infallibility; as that Infallibility be assign'd in any of those five manners above mentioned.

§. II. Now to begin with the Traditional Authorities for Infallibility at large, and to examine their several kinds about it.

I. Here is no Traditional Divine Saying offered to this Purpose: no word reported from our Saviour, or the Apostles, making mention of such a Power somewhere given; and directing us, so much as in the general, to resort to the Infallible Authority, and submit to its Determination.

II. There is no such saying of any Ancient, affirming the modern existence of Infallibility; no mention of the Unerring Tribunal.

III. We find in Practice no such supposition, from the Appeals and Addresses of contending Parties: no such Phrase or Style as this; I am ready to refer my self to the Decision of those that cannot Err; I appeal to the Infallible Judge.

I know of nothing that can look like any sort of Evidence on this Subject; except that Article of the Creed should be alledged, wherein we profess to believe in the Holy Catholick Church: as if by this Profession we did own some Living Unerring Guide, and our duty to submit to that Conduct.

Now

Chap. 4. *No Proof from Tradition for Infallibility at large.*

Now to this Suggestion there is a very ready answer, without Enquiring into the meaning of those words. For whatever the meaning be, it must be such a one, as is express'd already in the Holy Scriptures: the Articles of the Creed being declared by sufficient Authority to be Scriptural Assertions, and not to be derived from Oral Tradition. For this we have the Positive Affirmation of two Ancient Expositors of the Creed, St. *Cyrill*, and the Author of the first Book to the *Catechumens*, going under St. *Austin*'s Name.

St. *Cyrill*, speaking to the *Catechumens*, says in his Fifth Catechetick Discourse. *Embrace and keep this Faith, which is now delivered to you by the Church, and which is confirmed by the whole Scripture. For because every person is not able to read the Scriptures, but some are debarr'd from that Knowledge for want of Learning, and some by want of Leisure; for that reason, lest any Soul should perish by Ignorance, we have the whole Doctrine of our Faith comprehended in these few Lines——— Keep in your memory this Faith; and expect hereafter the confirmation of each Article from the Holy Scriptures. For the Creed does not consist of the Opinions of Men; but of the Chief Heads of Holy Scripture, collected out of it, and brought together in this Form.*

The first Book to the *Catechumens* begins thus. *Receive my Children the Rule of Faith, which is called the Symbol: and when ye have received it, write it in your hearts, and say it every day to your selves. Before ye go to sleep, and before you go abroad, arm your selves with your Symbol,* [ or *Creed.* ] *No body writes the Creed to read it, but to get it by heart; lest that which has been preserv'd to us by diligence, should be blotted out by forgetfulness. Let your Book be your Memory: that which you are now to hear, ye are to believe; and that which you shall believe, ye are to repeat again with your Tongue: As the Apostle says; with the heart we believe unto righteousness, and with the Mouth Confession is made unto Salvation. This then is the Symbol which you are to remember, and to repeat.——— These words which you have heard, are found scattered here and there in the Holy Scriptures, but they have been collected thence, and brought together in this manner: lest the Memo-*

Chap. 4. *No Proof from Tradition for Infallibility at large.*

*ries of the Unlearned ſhould be at a loſs; and to the end that every man ſhould be able to ſay, and to comprehend,* [or *Retain,*] *that which he does believe.*

It appears therefore evidently, that no Article of the Creed is to be produc'd as Traditional proof; and that this Article concerning the Church is to import no other Propoſition, than ſuch as may be collected and demonſtrated from the Holy Scriptures. Upon which account it cannot be ſuppos'd to imply, either an Infallibility in groſs, or affix'd to certain Perſons; except ſuch Infallibility could be proved from the written word, a thing by no means to be done, as we have already ſeen.

This Anſwer in Bar would be ſufficient alone. But we may be content to conſider more fully this their only Argument; and the rather, becauſe we may meet the Article again on other heads: beſides, theſe word Church and Catholick being often to occur, we have here given us a convenient occaſion to explain them.

Firſt then, a Church is a Society founded by Chriſt, on ſuch Belief, and ſuch Obedience, as he has preſcrib'd; which we own, and to which we engage our ſelves by Baptiſm. This Church was firſt Erected at *Jeruſalem*: and from that there have been ſince raiſed, by the Order of our Lord, and Labours of his Servants, infinite more.

The Word Catholick is Greek, and includes in it the ſignification of All, or a whole. Now it is known that the Notion of All or Whole may be either ſimply taken, for a Sum and Aggregate of parts not otherwiſe joyn'd; or for a Whole, properly ſo called, whoſe parts have between themſelves ſome other Union.

As then the word Catholick implys no more than number: ſo the firſt ſingle Church at *Jeruſalem* might be ſtiled Catholick, in contradiction to the *Jewiſh*, becauſe it lay open to all men, without exception of Nation, or Sex, or Quality, to *Jews*, and *Gentiles*, Men and Women, Bond and Free. So too, when there were more Churches propagated, all thoſe Churches Collectively might be call'd the Catholick or Univerſal Church, as being the Particulars in a Sum or Aggregate, without any conſideration yet

yet of a nearer Conjunction. In the ſame manner it is plain that the Doctrine that was taught in common in all thoſe Churches, might be called Catholick too.

Chap. 4. *No Proof from Tradition for Infallibility at large.*

Now it having pleas'd the Holy Providence of God to qualify his Servants for the Univerſal Catholick Promulgation of his Goſpel by the Gift of Tongues, and to ſend them out immediately into all the World, in their ſeveral Miſſions: as all parts were in a little time made happy by the knowledge of the Truth; ſo there reſulted this advantage from that diſperſion to the word of Truth, that it was now lodged and depoſited, as it were by ſo many Copies, in ſo many ſeveral diſtant hands, and was thereby the better ſecur'd, from being either loſt, or corrupted. Upon which account there could be no queſtion in the firſt Ages, but thoſe Doctrines or Precepts were Apoſtolical and Divine, which were found to be taught in all the diſtant Churches, and Univerſally atteſted by the whole World.

From this conſideration therefore of the State of the Chriſtian Church in its beginning, the word Catholick might by a Metonymy be brought to ſignify True: and thence it might come, that in Theologick Language, Catholick Doctrine, is the ſame as true Doctrine; and a Catholick Church, that which Profeſſes the True Faith, and the True Obedience.

So it might be. But finding the word Catholick under that Figurative ſence, very early, not only in the Authors of the fourth Age [1], or of the third [2]; but of the ſecond too, as in *Clemens Alexandr.* [3]. and higher in the *Letter of the Church of* Smyrna *concerning* Polycarp's *Martyrdom* [4] (if not in *Juſtin Martyr* [5]: ) finding, I ſay, the word ſo early us'd in that ſence, as an ordinary Appellative, and wanting no Adjunct to explain it: one may be tempted to think, that this was then no new Metonymical Expreſſion, juſt rais'd to ſignify from the particular Circumſtances of Chriſtianity, but that rather it had been received into common uſe before in thoſe Countries, and had the Notion of Verily affix'd to it. For long before, among the Logicians, ever ſince *Ariſtotle*'s time, a Catholick Attribute was

Chap. 4. *No Proof from Tradition for Infallibility at large.*

was that which belonged to the Subject essentially, and for ever [6]. And so in *Quintilian*, a Catholick Precept or Maxime, was that which held true absolutely, and without any exception [7]. And lastly, in the Titles of the Chapters of *Pliny*'s Natural History, we find the Properties of the Planets, called their Catholick Affections; and afterwards the Propositions concerning Lightning, *Catholica Fulgurum* [8]. From all which it is very probable, that Catholick did stand in Profane Usage for Universally the Same, and constantly True. And this Notion of Truth or Certainty appears further, from the contrary word Heresy: which signifies an Opinion taken up upon Choice, or at Pleasure [9]; at the best only Probable and Contingent, and so distinguish'd from Science and Demonstration; but sometimes understood in a worse Sence, and as oppos'd to Truth, even in the time of the New Testament [10], at farthest, notoriously so taken by *Justin Martyr*, *Ireneus*, and *Clemens Alexandrinus* [11], &c. The last of those mention'd Authors very much countenances the Comparative observation we are now making [12]. And upon the whole, it may be, one may be allowed to guess, that the loose meaning of Universal or General does not always in Ecclesiastical Writers belong to Catholick, there where it is ordinarily assign'd [13].

[1] Of this the Instances are well known and many noted by Bishop *Pearson* on this Article, in his Exposition of the Creed. [2] The Synod of *Antioch* held in the year 272, has these expressions in its Circular Letter; Καθολικὸν φρόνημα & Τῇ Καθολικῇ Εκκλησία καταστῆσαι Ἐπίσκοπον, speaking of the Church of *Antioch*, and Πᾶσαι αἱ Καθολικὰς Ἐκκλησίαι. St. *Cyprian* in the 47*th*, and 49*th* Epistle of the *Oxford* Edit. *ann.* 251, 252, uses *Catholica Ecclesia* in that Sence; and so *Firmilian* in his Letter *anno Chr* 256. So *Tertullian*, in the beginning of the Century, in his Book *de Prescr.* c. 30. [3] μεταγενεστέρας τῆς Καθολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας τὰς ἀνθρωπίνας συνηλύσεις πεποιήκασι. *Strom.* 7. [4] *Polycarp* is called, in the Letter of the Church of *Smyrna*, [*Usser.* p. 25. *Euseb.* Hist. l. 4 c. 15.] about the middle of the Second Century, Ἐπίσκοπος τῆς ἐν Σμύρνῃ Καθολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας. [5] Καθολικὴ δόξα seems to bear such a sence in the beginning of his Book *de Monarch.* [6] Καθόλου δὲ λέγω, ὃ ἂν κατὰ παντός τε ὑπάρχῃ, καὶ καθ' αὑτὸ, καὶ ἦ αὐτὸ. *Analyt. Post.* l. 1. c. 4. Πρότασις καθόλου, αἴδιος. μὴ καθόλου, φθαρτὴ. Τὸ γὰρ ἀεὶ καὶ πανταχοῦ καθόλου εἶναι φαμέν. Ibid. c. 7. [7] *Quintil.* l. 2. c. 13. *Præcepta Catholica. i. e. Universalia & Perpetualia. Leges immutabili Necessitate constrictæ.* [8] *Libr.* 2. *cap.* 17. 54. [9] Αἵρεσις, Πρόσκλισις ἐν δόγμασιν ἀκολουθίαν ἔχουσι. Diog. *Laert. in Proœm. Hæreses, quarum opera sunt Adulteræ Doctrinæ, dictæ Grecâ Voce ex interpretatione Electionis, quâ quis, sive ad instituendas, sive ad suscipiendas eas, utitur. De arbitrio suo inducere.* Tertul. *De Præscrip.* c. 16. *Hæresis, Humana Præsumptio.* De Jejun. c. 1. [10] 24 Act. 5. 14. 1 Cor. 11.

1 Cor. 11. 19. [11] Ὅτι τῶν Αἱρέσεων ἀνάγκη τὴν ὀνομασίαν, πρὸς ἀντιδιαστολὴν τῆς Αληθείας, λέγεσθαι γινώσκομεν. Strom. 7. ἐπισπαρήσεσθαι τὰς Αἱρέσεις τῇ Αληθείᾳ καθάπερ τῷ πυρῷ τὰ ζιζάνια. *Ibid.* and so Αἱρετικὸς is rendred by *Hesychius* ὁ ἄλλοτι παρὰ τὴν Αλήθειαν αἱρούμενος ἔχειν. [12] The latter part of the 7th *Strom.* beginning at Ἐπειδὴ δὲ ἀκόλουθόν ἐστι πρὸς τὰ ὑπὸ Ελλήνων —— which we have often cited already, supposes Hereticks to be led by uncertain Opinions, and Fancies of Probability; but the True Church to be founded on Science, and Demonstration [that is on Προτάσεις Καθόλου]. on this occasion he says. Ἑτέρα δ' οἶμαι τῶν Πιθανῶν ἐπιχειρημάτων, καὶ ἑτέρα τῶν Αληθῶν ἡ φύσις and Τριῶν οὐσῶν διαθέσεων τῆς ψυχῆς, Ἀγνοίας, Οἰήσεως, Ἐπιστήμης: Οἱ μὲν ἐν τῇ ἀγνοίᾳ, τὰ Ἔθνη: Οἱ δὲ ἐν τῇ ἐπιστήμῃ, ἡ Ἐκκλησία ἡ Αληθὴς: Οἱ δὲ ἐν τῇ Οἰήσει, οἱ κατὰ τὰς Αἱρέσεις. to which add that Sentence before cited numb. 11 and then it will appear that Δόξα Καθολικὴ may be well said πρὸς ἀντιδιαστολὴν τῆς Αἱρέσεως. [13] possibly in that passage of *Eusebius*, (Hist. *l.* 4. c. 7) Προήει δὲ εἰς αὔξησιν καὶ μέγεθος, ἀεὶ κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ καὶ ὡσαύτως ἔχουσα, ἡ τῆς Καθόλου, καὶ μόνης Αληθοῦς Ἐκκλησίας, λαμπρότης: ἀεὶ κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ καὶ ὡσαύτως ἔχουσα, and μόνη Αληθὴς, may be but the Exposition of ἡ Καθόλου. And in that of *Justin Martyr*'s Dialogue, Τὴν καθολικὴν καὶ συνελόντι φάναι αἰωνίαν ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἅμα πάντων ἀνάστασιν γενήσεσθαι καὶ κρίσιν: καθολικὴ may have in it the signincation of αἰωνία, as well as of what follows, *&c.*

But whatever the reason might be of the acceptation of the word; this is certain, that in Christian Phrase Catholick has been the same with Orthodox; and the true Doctrine, or Church, so named in opposition to the false, very Antiently, if not all along from the beginning of Christianity.

Next we are to consider the Word as it signifies All, or a Whole of Parts, not only summ'd up in a number, but United in its Constitution.

Any single Church, is such a whole of particular Persons Confederated and Conjoin'd together, in the Profession of the same Truths, and the same Obedience, under Christ our Lord; by whose Authority this Strict Regular Society was first founded; and in Obedience to whom, it is always to be maintain'd.

Such a single Church was that of *Jerusalem*, the Original and mother of all the rest. And then, when there was no other, he that should have broke the Union and Order of that Body, would have been a Schismatick; and he that had kept it, as properly styl'd a Catholick.

But after, when other Churches were formed by the Apostles and their Disciples, these distinct Churches, as they were founded severally in that first Unity of Order, each

Chap. 4. *No Proof from Tradition for Infallibility at large.*

each within themselves; so too they were founded in a Collateral Unity one with another: all those several Churches or Bodies making one Church, or one Body, called therefore the Catholick Church.

For those several Churches, were not only of the like kind and nature, professing the same Faith and Obedience; but they were all, virtually and in effect the same Church: each member of each Society having a right in all; by his admittance into one, being admitted into the rest, and made perfectly free of all those Christian Corporations. So that the Identity between any such two Societies was not only specifical, but in some kind numerical too: and as the Christian Society of *Jerusalem* continued the same, notwithstanding the change of Persons by lapse of time; so the Christian Society of *Antioch* was the same with that of *Jerusalem*, notwithstanding the difference of Persons by distance of place. Upon the account therefore of this Fundamental Close Union, by which each Church is immediately join'd with, and incorporated into each other, all those Churches together are properly stil'd the Catholick Church, and each of those Churches is Catholick too.

This Secondary Collateral Union is immediate and internal, belongs fundamentally and essentially to the Constitution of a Christian Church, and is so expressed by the Antients, by *Tertullian* particularly, and by St. *Cyprian*.

Tot & tantæ Ecclesiæ, una est illa ab Apostolis prima, ex quâ omnes; sic omnes prima, & Apostolicæ dum unâ omnes probant Unitatem. *Tert.* de Præscript. *c.* 20.

Episcoparus unus est, cujus a singulis in solidum pars tenetur. *Cypr.* de *Unit. Eccl.* Et si Pastores multi sumus, Unum tamen Gregem pascimus. Id. Ep. 68. Edit. *Oxon.*

Besides this Essential Unity between different Churches, there is another Mediate and External one; as when the several particular Churches shall joyn together in some common form of Policy, and under the Government and Direction of some one Church, in which the rest Concenter, and by the mediation of which they are further United. This Principal Church, is then the Root, the Origine, and the Center of this Political Union. Such a Church is the Metropolitan Church of each Province, in respect of the particular Bishopricks: the

the Patriarchal, in respect of the particular Provinces: and such the Church of *Rome* would be, in respect of the Patriarchates themselves. The *Romanists* therefore suppose those several Churches that Communicate with the *Roman* Church, to be Catholick by that Communion; and those altogether, with her their Chief and Head, to make the Catholick Church: and this by Divine Right, and from the Institution of Christ; which whosoever denys is most properly a Schismatick in their Opinion.

Chap. 4. *No Proof from Tradition for Infallibility at large.* Sect. 3.

Whether the Church of *Rome* has such a Supremacy by Divine Ordinance; or whether all this External Unity, by which particular Churches Politically confederate together for common Government, be not Positive and Humane; we are not now to enquire: that notion of Catholick which denotes Communion, and is oppos'd to Schism, belonging not to our present purpose. At this time, our search is after a judge of Controversy, and we are to consider the Church Catholick, only as it signifies Orthodox, and in opposition to Heresy and Errour: we having nothing now to do with the Church of *Rome*, as it pretends to be the Center of Unity, but as it claims to be the Basis of Truth.

This is the Import of the Words Church, and Catholick: we come now to consider them, as they lie in the Creed.

Here then we are to observe first, concerning the Creed in general; that as Catholick signifies Orthodox, so this Creed was nothing else but the Orthodox Profession. For it so coming to pass, that there arise up in the beginning of Christianity very dangerous Errours, and destructive of the true Faith; the Catholick or true Church thought advisable in opposition to those Errours, to form to it self some short fundamental Profession, whereby they might distinguish themselves from Hereticks, as by a *Shibboleth*: which Profession being Characteristick, or the Cognisance and word of a true Regular Christian, was called for that reason *Symbolum*, or a Mark and Token.

Our Saviour himself made his own *Symbol* or Cognisance first; when he commanded his Disciples to Baptise

Chap. 4. *No Proof from Tradition for Infallibility at large.* Sect. 3.

in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt. For by this Mark of difference, the True Chriſtian was firſt diſtinguiſh'd from a Heathen, as believing in the Father the God of the *Jews*; ſecondly from an ordinary *Jew*, as believing the Son Chriſt Jeſus to be the *Meſſias*: and laſtly, he was diſcriminated from thoſe *Jews* who admitted Chriſt to be their Prophet and *Meſſias*, but would not recede from the Old Law, by believing in the Holy Ghoſt, who ſpoke by the Apoſtles, and declar'd the abrogation of that Covenant. So did our Saviour himſelf order his Diſciples to be Characteris'd, at their admiſſion, by the Belief of thoſe three Perſons, and obedience to their ſeveral directions.

But becauſe in a little time Deceivers crept in, who under the name of Chriſtians, and the ſhew of this Character, ſubverted the Faith; being really *Jews* or *Heathens*, and uſing the words of this Profeſſion in a meaning quite different from the firſt intention: it grew therefore neceſſary to determine thoſe few words of the Original Symbol to their proper ſence, by the addition of others, which ſhould further diſtinguiſh and divide the true Catholick Chriſtian, from the Heretical and falſe. Leſt therefore an *Ethnick* Chriſtian, under the name of Father, ſhould mean ſome other God, different from the Creator; He was to add expreſly, the Maker of Heaven and Earth: and leſt he ſhould mean ſuch a Son, as was man only in appearance; or the *Jews* ſuch a one as was man only, and as the reſt of men; he was oblig'd to profeſs his belief circumſtantially, in that Son, *who was conceived by the Holy Ghoſt, born of the Virgin* Mary, *and who ſuffered under* Pontius Pilate, *was Crucified, Dead, and Buried*, &c.

The Archetypal Original Symbol of our Saviours, ſo explain'd, is call'd the Symbol or Creed of the Apoſtles: being explain'd after their mind, and expreſly in their own Phraſe. This, as far as the Article of the Holy Ghoſt, (excepting that of Chriſt's deſcent into Hell) was every where Uniformly profeſs'd over all the World; and call'd antiently the immoveable Rule, and Unreformable Canon. It was the fundamental Characteriſtick of Catholiciſm:

tholicism: by the Profession of it men were Baptis'd, and admitted to be the true Christians; and that Baptism, at which such a Profession could not be presum'd, was reputed and declared null; and consequently a Christian, otherwise made, suppos'd to be none.

Now altho' those that profess'd this Creed, were by it sufficiently discriminated from the grosser Hereticks, such as deserv'd not really the name of Christian: yet other Heresies there were, very dangerous and wicked, that might hide themselves under this form; and could not be detected and sever'd, but by some more precise distinction. The *Arrian* Heresy denying the Coeternal Existence of our Saviour, occasion'd therefore that enlargment, concerning the Son, which we find in the *Nicene* Creed; and afterwards, the *Macedonian*, denying the Person of the Holy Ghost, that Explanation we have on that Article in the same *Nicene* Creed, as it is commonly called. After that too, the *Nestorians*, *Eutychians*, &c. gave further reason for the additional Explications, that are given on those subjects, in the Creed that goes under the name of *Athanasius*.

So were these Symbols and Cognisances of the true Belief enlarged, and multiplied, occasionally: each of them, in their several times, being Characteristical enough; till new and other Heresies arose, which were to be excluded by some further distinction. But all along, whereas these and after Creeds differenced the Pure Christianity, from Christianity Corrupt; the Apostolical was suppos'd to discern between the true, and that falsly so call'd: and accordingly the admission into common Christianity by Baptism, continued still to use only this Mark; while at the same time there were other marks in use, to separate one Christian from another.

Now as Heresies and Errours are of different sorts; some more gross, and more contrary to the Christian Faith, some less; some utterly inconsistent with Christianity, the Heresies of the first Ages, some Consistent with it; and of these some highly dangerous, and some pernicious in a less degree: so on the other side, Orthodoxy, or a Catholick Belief, may either be so in perfection, purely and absolutely, and void of all sorts of Errour; or else in its

Chap. 4. *No Proof from Tradition for Infallibility at large.* Sect. 3.

degree, and qualifiedly; not pure from all Errour, but from ſuch of which ſome, otherwiſe good Chriſtians, are guilty; from ſuch ſo groſs, and very dangerous; at leaſt from ſuch which are abſolutely incompatible with the Chriſtian profeſſion.

Accordingly, one that Profeſs'd the Apoſtle's Creed, in the Elder Times, and when no other Errours appear'd to infeſt the Church, but ſuch as were refuted by that form; was, by that Symbol, reputed and known for a Catholick Abſolute. Afterwards, when the *Arrian* or *Macedonian* Hereſies came up, if he adhear'd to thoſe, and did not ſubſcribe to the *Nicene Creed*; he was, by that new Mark to be held no abſolute Catholick, and a Heretick in that regard: but he yet continued ſo far Catholick, as to be accounted a Chriſtian; and Catholick too he might be juſtly ſtyl'd, in reſpect of other Hereticks, the *Simonians*, *Baſilidians*, *Valentinians*, *Marcionites*, &c. whoſe Impieties he had renounc'd in the Apoſtle's Creed. In the ſame manner, he that profeſſes the *Nicene Creed*, is a Catholick reſpectively to thoſe Hereticks, and to the *Arrian* and *Macedonian* too; tho' not therefore neceſſarily a perfect Catholick: for he may be a *Neſtorian*, *Eutychian*, &c. And ſo too he that owns the *Athanaſian Creed*, as he is Catholick in reſpect of all thoſe fore-mention'd errours; ſo he may not yet be compleatly Catholick: for he may be Heretical, in thoſe points particularly, about which the *Roman* and the *Proteſtant* Churches differ.

And according to this account it is, that we Proteſtants, ſpeaking concerning Chriſtian Doctrine, may allow the *Romaniſts* the Title of Catholick; provided they will bear the Symbol with a difference, and diſtinctive Mark of Diminution. For as an *Arrian* Catholick will ſignify one that holds to the Apoſtle's Creed, and is not a *Marcionite*; &c. and as an *Eutychian* Catholick, will mean one that holds to the *Nicene*, and is not an *Arrian*: ſo a *Roman Catholick*, or *Popiſh Catholick*, will denominate one, free from the Hereſies of the firſt ſeven hundred years; though groſly Erroneous in other points, and ſuch of which an *Arrian*, or *Eutychian*, would never have been guilty.

The

The Apoſtle's Creed, of which we are ſpeaking, was ſo fram'd for a Symbol of Catholiciſm. But what we have ſuggeſted of the latter Articles, that they were variouſly inſerted over the Chriſtian World; that we are now to obſerve particularly, concerning this of the Catholick Church.

For (1) this Article was not in the Antient Eaſtern Creeds: not in the *Nicene*, properly ſo call'd, and as deliver'd by that Council. It is not in thoſe Creeds among St. *Jerom*'s Works: as it is not in that we call the *Athanaſian*. (2) It was early in the *Latine* Creeds; as we learn by *Tertullian*: but with ſome difference. For whereas the *Roman* brought it in Affirmatively, and in the place where it now ſtands: the *African* brought it in at laſt, and indirectly too. As in St. *Cyprian*'s time it run thus; *I believe in the Remiſſion of Sins, and Eternal Life by the Holy Church:* In the time of thoſe three laſt Expoſitions of the Creed, aſcrib'd to St. *Auguſtin*, thus; *I believe in the Remiſſion of Sins, the Reſurrection of the Dead, and Eternal Life, by the Holy Church.* And beſides it may be obſerv'd, that in theſe *Latine* Symbols the Epithet, whether for Ornament or Diſtinction of the Church, was *Holy*, and not Catholick: this Greek word being borrowed afterwards from the Uſage of the *Grecian* Churches. *Tert.* de Bapt. c. 6.

Now then, to return to our preſent Enquiry, the occaſion of this Digreſſion; and to ſee, whether the notion of an Infallible Judge or Guide, be to be underſtood under this Article: let us obſerve, that

The word *Church* has not in it the ſignification of a Tribunal, or Court of Judicature.

And then in the next place, the Epithets *Holy* or *Catholick*, do not ſuperinduce any ſuch meaning. The moſt they can ſignify towards it is True and Orthodox: But whoever is True and Orthodox, is not therefore an Infallible Guide. For (1) a Particular Church may be Orthodox, and actually Unerring; and yet not be Infallible: for it might not have been impoſſible for her to have erred, even in thoſe Points, in which ſhe does not err. She may too be Orthodox in all thoſe Points, ſhe has already declar'd;

Chap. 4. *No Proof from Tradition for Infallibility at large.* Sect. 3.

declar'd; and yet she may afterwards err in new Points, and which want a new Declaration. And (*Secondly*,) the Position of a Church Unerring, or if you will Infallible, does not therefore inferr, that the Unerring Church is an Unerring Guide, and an Infallible Judge in Controversy: except at the same time it be suppos'd, that that Unerring Church may be known to be so, and distinguish'd from others, by proper Marks, and such as are external to those Truths in which she does not err. For if we agree, that there is such an Unerring Church; but are to find her out by the Truths she professes, and by the Examination of her Doctrines: we are not then guided by the Infallible, to Truth; but by the Truth to this Infallible; neither is such a Church to us, a Judge of Doctrines; but it is we who are by those Doctrines, to Judge of Her.

Now if we consider this Article, as it lyes in the *African* Creed; where the Candidate for Baptism profes's'd to believe the Remission of Sins, *&c.* by the Holy Church; the most the *African* could be suppos'd to say, was, that Remission was not to be had out of the Unerring Church: but, that such a Church Unerring, was the Infallible Guide he does not at all affirm. For his plain meaning must either be, that he expected to be sav'd, by being Baptis'd into the Catholick Church in General; or with a particular Implication; either that this Catholick Church, was the Church which profes's'd the Creed he repeated; or else the Church in which he was going to be Baptis'd. If he meant an Orthodox Church in General, which ever, and where ever it was; it is plain then, from what we just now premis'd, that he meant not the Church to be a Guide, or Judge; for as a Guide she must be ascertain'd and determin'd. And too, if he meant an Orthodox Church in particular, determining that to be so, which profes's'd the Apostolical Creed; it is as manifest, that he spoke not of that Churches being Judge in other Points. But if he design'd the Local Church in which he was to be Baptis'd, by that name; it is then too evident, that however he might take that Church to be Catholick

Catholick in all her Tenets; yet he did not affirm that ſhe might not grow Uncatholick, even in thoſe, or at leaſt in other new ones: much leſs did he aſſert that he knew her to be Catholick, by Permanent outward Marks of Place or Number; by which marks (to be a Guide) ſhe was to be diſtinguiſh'd in that Age, and to the end of the World.



It appears, I ſuppoſe, that an *African* in the recital of his Creed, was not oblig'd, by that indirect mention of the Church, to aſcribe any Judicial Infallibility to Her. And then as to the *Nicene*, tho' this Article be there expreſſed directly, in the Clauſe brought in by the Council of *Conſtantinople*; yet it can ſeem to have no other Conſtruction than what the *Africans* gave. For he that profeſſes to believe One Holy Catholick Church; to acknowledge one Baptiſm for the Remiſſion of Sins; and to look for the Reſurrection of the Body, and Everlaſting Life after death: what does he mean elſe, but that he believes the Remiſſion of Sins, [to be obtain'd] by [being Baptis'd and admitted into] the Catholick Church, in proſpect and hopes of Everlaſting Life? Such a Sence the *Nicene Creed* manifeſtly carries, agreeably to the *African*: and then it can never be preſum'd that the *Roman* or any other did under the ſame words intend a different meaning. But all this appears further.

For if the Notion of *Holy*, or *Catholick Church*, will not infer that of a Judge or Guide: the Phraſe *I believe*, or *I believe in*, will not contribute much towards it.

The Primary Notion of the word Believe, as it is us'd in the Creed, denotes a firm Perſwaſion concerning the Truth, either of the Eſſence, or Exiſtence of the Thing believ'd: as that there is ſuch a Being as a God; ſuch a thing to be had as Remiſſion of Sins. If it implies any further Sence, either of Reliance or Submiſſion, or Hope and Expectation; that additional Notion ariſes from the Nature of the Thing believ'd. As, He that believes there is a God, ſubmits to his Guidance by implication, becauſe he is God: And he that believes the Remiſſion of Sins, hopes for it, as for a thing extreamly deſirable.

Chap. 4. *No Proof from Tradition for Infallibility at Large.* Sect. 3.

sirable. By the same Construction, he that believes in the Catholick Church, believes first the Essence or Existence of it; that there ought to be, or is such a Society; or that this Society is it: but is not to be suppos'd to own it for an Infallible Guide or Judge, except some such notion be involv'd in the Notion of the Church, which he so believes. When therefore the Phrase *I believe in* is continued through all the Articles (as it is in St. *Cyril*'s Creed) it signifies always according to the connotation of the Subject to which it is applyed: and then to believe in the Remission of Sins, or in the Resurrection of the Dead, is the same as to acknowledge one Baptism for the Remission of Sins, and to look for the Resurrection of the Dead in the *Nicene*. But the *Roman* (as *Ruffinus* observes) to make the distinction plainer; and that we may not seem to believe in the Church as we do in the Trinity; puts its *Credo* to all the later Articles without the Preposition *in*; saying, *Credo Sanctam Ecclesiam*, &c. *I believe that there is*, or *that this is the Holy Church*.

The Sum of all is this; that the Article concerning the Church, acknowledges either the Essence and Nature; or else the Existence also of such a Society.

The Essence of the Holy Church consists in this: that it is a Society instituted by Christ, into which men enter by Baptism, Professing the Belief of his Holy Truths, and Obedience to his Holy Commands, in hopes of Eternal Salvation; which Society it is the duty of those Christian men (according to one of those Commands) to maintain and to propagate to the end of the World. This is its Essence in General: and it may be particularis'd, by the Belief of such and such Articles, which the false Churches deny. Now the Confession of such a Society, with its Nature, Priviledges, and Duties, in the Confession of a very great and weighty Truth, and enough to make up one Article of our Creed.

The Existence of this Society will respect either the Past, or the Present, or the Future: That there was such a Church, or is, or ever shall be.

That

Chap. 4. *No Proof from Tradition for Infallibility at large.* Sect. 3.

That there was such a Church once instituted, and actually erected, is, together with the Essence of it, an undoubted part of our necessary Belief. But that this Church was existent heretofore in some other past Age, or that it Exists now, or shall always hereafter; these Propositions, tho' Truths, may be only Contingent, and not so certain as an Article of our Creed. How far these Circumstances of Existence, are imply'd in this Article; it is not our business now to enquire: it is enough for us at present, to have discover'd that the Notion of a Catholick Church although signifying an Unerring Church, does not signify an Unerring Judge or Guide; and that consequently the Existence of this Church, however it may be Co-signified, does not infer neither the Existence of such an Infallible Proponent. See the 13. Chap.

By this way of deduction it sufficiently appears, that no Infallibility in gross is meant under this Article. And this Course I have the rather took, because it has naturally led us into an easie meaning of an Article of so great importance. But that no such thing, as an Infallible Tribunal was ever intended by it; we have still a further and an undeniable Evidence.

We have still extant many Antient Expositions on the Creed, (two we have cited above) made on purpose to instruct the *Candidates* for Baptism; Compos'd too much about that time, when this Article came to be Universally receiv'd into the Symbol; as the Catechetical Discourses of St. *Cyril* Bishop of *Jerusalem*, the Exposition of *Ruffinus*, and those four Books we find in St. *Augustin*'s Works on that Subject; the several Expositions in *Chrysologus*, and in *Maximus Taurinensis*: and from these we shall best learn the sence of the Church of that time, concerning her self; and whether any Judgment Seat was intended by this Article.

Now none of these Catechetical Doctors, in their Discourses on this Article, are found to make any manner of mention of an Infallible Judge, neither in General, nor Particular: nor do they refer the Christian Novices to the further direction of any Unerring Person or Assembly. Whatever they propose to their Disciples out of

Chap. 4. *No Proof from Tradition for Infallibility at large.* Sect. 3.

the Creed it self, they think themselves obliged to prove out of the *Scripture*; being content that neither they, nor their Church should be credited on other Terms. Accordingly upon the Precedent Articles, they discover and they refute the Errours of those Hereticks, that had arose; and upon this they declare the institution of a Church by Christ; and that to be the True Church, which rejected those Heresies; that the others were impious Confederations, and Councils of vanity; that this they were to adhere to as the One, the Holy, the Catholick. But they still prove the Church, into which the *Catechumen* was entring, by her Doctrine; and never the Doctrine, by the Church: they affirm *de Facto* that it did not err; but never assert, that *de Jure* it could not have err'd, by priviledge of Place, or Number: much less do they oblige the *Catechumen* in vertue of this Article to submit for the future, to the Decisions of such a Tribunal; and blindly to receive whatever other Articles such a number of Men should determine, with the same Faith and Assent, with which he now believ'd the Articles of his Creed, and the present Faith in that Church professed. Of such an Authority in the Church, and such a Submission in the Members, of which our Modern *Roman Catechists* say so much, on this Article; these Antient Doctors, say not a Syllable. Hence therefore from all those Premises we conclude undeniably, that an Infallible Judicatory was never at all intended by this Article; and that Holy and Catholick Church here, did never in the least signify any necessary implication of the Pope, or of a Majority or certain proportion of Bishops, or Faithful: by which we learn, that this Article of the Creed can neither be brought against us on this Head, nor on any of those that follow.

§. IV. BUT THEN FURTHER, WE DO NOT ONLY LEARN from the Expositors of the Creed, that an Infallible Authority in the Church, is no Article of the Creed; but we find, from their silence in this matter, great reason to think, that there was in their time no such Article believ'd at all.

For had there been own'd any such Principle of Christianity at that time; it must have been of the same Importance and Necessity, which it is now esteem'd to bear; and

and alike reputed the Primary and Fundamental Principle of Divine Truths to men. Neither can it be imagin'd, that it should not have had its proper place in the Creed, Universally, and from the beginning; being of such Consequence to the understanding of the other Articles, by whose help their sence was chiefly to be determin'd, and for whose sake they were to be believ'd by most of mankind. Had therefore this Principle been then own'd; a Principle so necessary to be known, that the denyal of it is the formality of Heresie, and the very ignorance of it unexcusable; insomuch that most other Truths may be implicitely believ'd in this, but this must be explicitely profess'd, under the pain of inevitable Damnation; had it I say been own'd then for true, how could it have been left out of the Creed, without the greatest negligence in the Composers, and the greatest danger to the Salvation of Men? Is it imaginable that the mention of the Church, would throughout all *Africk* have been made so by the by, and as it were by chance; much less, that it should have been so totally neglected by the Eastern Christians, the most Numerous, and the most Knowing of those Times? Or is it likely, that at last, when the Church came generally into the Creed, the Infallible should not be particularis'd by some distinctive Character; and that so necessary a notice, of so high and useful a Prerogative should have been utterly forgotten? But suppose the Article of an Infallible Guide, left out of the Creed by I know not what design; (I suppose because it was a Principle of more evidence, than the being of a God:) yet it is hard to think, that upon the mention of the Church, though brought in to another purpose, no Expositors should have occasionally remembred this Benificial and Instructive Truth. Was an Unerring Guide so little thought of, and of so slight a Consideration, that it came not into the mind of the *Catechist*, and was not worth the mentioning to the New Christian? what could be more natural, at the instruction of those that were just entring into the Church, then to have describ'd her to them, by her proper marks; to have commended her, by that high Endowment; to have ex-

Chap. 4. *No Proof from Tradition for Infallibility at Large.* Sect. 4.

horted them to believe their Creed, upon her Authority; and directed them to ſubmit all future Queſtions to her Infallible Deciſion? The Expoſitions of theſe *Catechiſts* are levelled chiefly againſt thoſe many Hereſies with which their Age was diſtracted; and great uſe there was to be made of the Infallible Guidance in their times; an occaſion too for the mentioning of that Guidance, if ever, was to be taken in thoſe Diſcourſes: and yet for all this ſo many Zealous Knowing Men, of ſo many ſeveral Countries, have all conſpir'd to omit it. In the Holy Scriptures there might be ſome pretence made of an indirect obſcure reference to it; and upon ſufferance it may be ſuppos'd that the more expreſs mention was refer'd to Tradition: But here in our Caſe, the Men we cite, are thoſe by whom the Tradition ſhould be convey'd; and this is the proper Time and Place for them to ſpeak it out; and yet it is not ſo much as pretended by the *Romaniſts*, that there has been the leaſt mention made of it by them: There muſt be ſome great Myſtery in this profound Silence of thoſe Expoſitors, concerning a ſtanding Infallibility: and what can it be but this; that they were utterly ignorant of the Thing?

And ſo we have again gained another Poſitive and irrefragable Argument, againſt the intent of our Adverſaries, from this other Evidence of their own ſhewing. We might therefore from this ſilence, firſt of the Scriptures, and then of the Creed and its Expoſitors, fairly put a Final Silence on the contrary Party. and here at leaſt cloſe the Diſpute. But if the Reader is pleas'd to lend me his Patience: the Romaniſts ſhall not complain, they were not heard out: only they muſt be content to know, that as the Proof now offered has diſcredited their Cauſe; ſo what remains grows ſtill harder upon them. For whereas, if an Infallibility at large had been countenanc'd by any tolerable Teſtimony; it would then have been the eaſier affix'd to ſome one of the Competitors, either Pope or Church, &c. according as they ſhould make the better claim: ſo now on the other hand, all the Parties together not being able to furniſh out ſuch an Evidence for the common Cauſe; we are left to proceed, free from any Prepoſſeſſion, to the examination of their ſeveral Titles; and are to expect, that whoever of them challenges this Infallible Authority, ſhould ſo make out his Propriety to it, as at the ſame time, if he can, to prove its Being.